

Attachment 4 – Employee Assistance Tool Kit



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

KATRINA – NPS
National Incident Management Team

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE BRANCH

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE TOOL KIT



National Park Service

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Eastern All Risk Incident Management Team

Memorandum

October 18, 2005

To: PS All Risk Incident Commanders

From: Incident Commander, Eastern IMT, Hurricane Katrina

Subject: Employee Assistance Tool Kit

In August 2005, Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans, Louisiana and much of the Gulf Coast in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Texas. In September 2005 Hurricane Rita added to the destruction in many of these same areas. Six National Park Service sites were affected by these storms: Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve, New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park, Big Thicket National Preserve, Gulf Islands National Seashore, Cane River Creole National Heritage Area, and Everglades National Park.

The National Incident Management Team arrived in Houston, Texas to establish a base for the management team in protecting and preserving these areas and beginning the road to recovery. On September 30, 2005 the Eastern Incident Management Team arrived in Thibodaux, Louisiana to continue the work initiated by the NIMT.

Many early questions concerned the establishment of the Employee Assistance Branch of the IMT. As a result of the early steps by the NIMT this "Tool Kit" was developed to provide assistance in setting up and carrying out the programs and policies of an Employee Assistance Branch during future events.

The questions and answers, forms, help sheets, emergency guidelines, and decision making tools are designed to assist only. The pages in this package were designed for Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. They may or may not work for your incident. We hope this guide will be useful in developing the necessary stages and programs for implementing an Employee Assistance Branch.

Incident Management Team

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE “TOOL KIT”

INTRODUCTION

The need for Employee Assistance (EA) to respond to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita was recognized immediately by the IMT. This was critical to facilitating employee/park relationships for the incident response. As a result, an Employee Assistance Branch was established. From the experiences gained, the following checklist has been developed as an aid to assist in future incidents of this nature. This tool kit may benefit personnel tasked with starting an employee assistance function on an incident management team.

INITIAL NEEDS and/or ACTIONS FOR EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE

ACTIONS

1. Establish Branch Director (or group supervisor) for Employee Assistance (EA)
2. Branch Director to verify objectives with Incident Command Team, park, regional and WASO liaisons.
 - Work with affected park(s) Superintendent(s) to establish park specific incident objectives. Establish/identify park liaison and/or Point of Contact (POC) for Employee Assistance. Request list of supervisory POCs to assist in locating employees.
 - Identify/clarify WASO, regional and incident EA roles and responsibilities. For example, per Superintendent or regional request, track temporary detail assignments of affected park staff. Identify region and WASO liaison's name and phone number.
3. Establish need and number of Employee Assistance staff.
4. Establish Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) staff for incident.
 - Establish peer support (CISM) for affected employees and responders.
 - Assess CISM need for park staff affected by incident
 - Assess CISM need for the incident's responders
 - Establish follow-up CISM contact for SETT and other designated responders after demob if no CISM is available prior to demob.
 - Capture gross statistics for individual and group meetings while maintaining confidentiality.
 - If applicable, consider establishing a long term mental health contract for affected park(s) to supplement existing EAP services.
5. When staff members arrive at the Incident Command Post (ICP), provide orientation/walk through for EA responders. Staff may not be familiar with Incident Command System (ICS) and set up.
6. Track employee welfare and work status. Update as needed using both electronic and hard copy format. Assist employees as needed within established guidelines. Maintain consistency throughout.
7. Establish need for temporary housing and track submitted requests through FEMA. Gather information and send to FEMA as needed.

8. Initiate strategy for transition process of employee assistance activities to park. Transfer database of staff information, both electronic and hard copies, to park prior to demob.

REFERENCE MATERIALS NEEDED EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE

1. 5 CFR Parts 1 to 699
2. 5 CFR Parts 1200 to End
3. Federal Personnel Payroll System (FPPS) listing of employee name, organization code, position title, series, grade, address
4. Organization chart for park
5. Latest updated affected park staff phone listing to include address, home phone numbers, work phone numbers, and cell phone numbers
6. Incident documentation: Incident Action Plan (IAP), crew time reports, general messages, unit logs, etc.
7. Phone list for the regional office for which the incident is located
8. Phone list of WASO contacts.
9. Maps and orientation materials of affected area.

LOGISTICAL NEEDS FOR EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE

1. Office space to accommodate EA staff.
2. Private area to work/meet with employees and/or responders.
3. Method to record data on employee status or needs such as Microsoft Office.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED FOR EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE

1. Lap top computer for each branch member w/ internet access
2. Internet access preferably with T-1 line
3. Network capability to connect all laptops/printer/ISP
4. Color printer/fax/copier/scanner (all-in-one unit) with extra cartridges
5. Cell phone for each branch member
6. Two land lines minimum. Two telephones minimum with answering machines.
7. Files, file cabinet or boxes, labels, pens, pencils, etc.

HANDOUTS FOR EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE

1. Develop incident specific Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
2. OPM, Departmental or NPS guidance related to the specific incident
3. FEMA, RED CROSS, or other information relevant to the specific incident
4. Message from Superintendent(s), if applicable
5. Critical Incident Stress Management Program (CISM) information

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE

1. Employee Assistance staff identified three phases of the incident
 - Phase I: Triage for employees and park
 - Phase II: Transition to finalizing housing needs, work status
 - Phase III: Transition EA to park
2. Identify skills sets necessary for EA staff
 - Organizational skills for working in stressful environments
 - Supervisory skills are critical for Branch Director-EA along with ability to establish action strategies under stressful conditions
 - Sensitivity to employees and responders operating in crisis environment

- Consider mobilizing primarily non-HR staff responders. HR skill sets are not necessarily the primary focus for EA responders. Option should be explored of providing one HR responder for subject matter expertise
- A roster should be maintained of recommended employees available for a detail with the Incident Command Team.
- Recommend a 14 - 21 day assignment for Employee Assistance staff who attend the first phase of a large incident response.

3. Create IC training curriculum and certification program.

Staff of Employee Assistance:

Betsy Rossini, BD-EA, Phase 1

Kathy Tustanowski-Marsh, Tech Specialist, Phase 1

Mary Beth Wester, BD-EA, Phase 2

Randy Wester, Tech. Specialist, Phase 2

Lesley Adams, JELA/JAZZ point of contact for EA, Phase 3

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**Employee Assistance
Package**

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE FOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE EMPLOYEES AFFECTED BY *HURRICANE KATRINA*

Employee Question & Answers

- Employee Assistance is currently working out of the Wetlands Acadian Cultural Center in Thibodaux, LA; **985-448-1471**. Contact them for further information on assistance available to employees.
- Please periodically check <http://www.inside.nps.gov> for new or changing information.

Will I get a paycheck if I'm not at work?

Yes. You will continue to receive your regular pay and be granted administrative leave until requested to return to work by your supervisor. The date you are returned to work will be dependent on a suitable work site and availability of work as identified by the park superintendent.

How can I get my paycheck if I can't get to or use my bank?

Most credit unions and banks are now up and running and your accounts should be accessible. If you are still having trouble, several sites have been set up to assist banking patrons get access to their funds. The following are sites and phone numbers to help you get information on banks and credit unions.

Office of Financial Institutions (banks, thrifts, and credit unions)

- Lafayette – (337) 262-5754
- Toll Free Nationwide – (866) 783-5530
- Toll Free In-state (888) 525-9414
- Website – www.ofi.louisiana.gov
- Credit union information – www.ncua.gov or www.cuweb.org/cu_finder.htm or (800) 827-6282.

Frequently asked questions regarding banking can be accessed at www.fdic.gov or at (877) 275-3342.

If you still are having trouble accessing your funds, you may want to set up a new bank account. To do that you can pick up a direct deposit form (SF-1199) from the bank. Fill out the top portion of the form. The bank will complete the lower portion of the form. Fax the direct deposit form to the Southeast Regional Office at **404-562-3255** attn: Leslie Woodie. Keep a copy of the form for your records. If you need assistance in completing or submitting the form, please call Employee Assistance at **985-448-1471**.

How can I get some cash for immediate needs?

- Eastern National Parks and the Employee Alumni Association have set up a fund to assist National Park Service and cooperating association employees impacted by Hurricane Katrina. Individuals are eligible to receive \$500.00 and a family is eligible to receive \$1000.00. Employee Assistance can provide you with the form (see phone number at top) by fax, mail or email or you can get the form from the Employee and Alumni Association at **215-283-6900** (ask for Jack Ryan or Chesley Moroz). If you are unable to get your immediate supervisor's signature have any park supervisor sign or you can fax the form without a supervisor's signature to **215-283-0923** with a note explaining your circumstances. Eastern National Parks will confirm with the Employee Assistance office that you are an affected employee. If you need assistance in filling out the forms or submitting them, please call Employee Assistance.
- FEMA is also providing some incidental funds for qualified applicants. To receive these funds you will need to register on the **www.fema.gov site or 1-800-621-FEMA (3362)**.

How do I pay for a hotel?

- FEMA will cover hotel room costs or evacuees for 14 days. Contact your hotel for information. Lodging costs already paid by displaced residents will be reimbursed by FEMA. You can get information at **fema.gov or 1-800-621-FEMA(3362)**.

Can you help me get assistance through FEMA?

We will try to post FEMA information at this site as we become aware of it (www.inside.nps.gov). There are three ways to register:

- Register on the internet at **fema.gov**
- Call **1-800-621-3362** (FEMA)
- Register at any major evacuation center

Here is some information you may want to know about FEMA at this time (subject to change by FEMA):

- There is a 18 month limitation for which you can apply for assistance
- The cap is \$26,200 and this includes charges that an applicant may have incurred while staying in a hotel
- Must file personal insurance claims first. FEMA may cover costs not covered by your insurance that are associated with the loss of an automobile, home or furniture
- May be eligible for \$2000 incidental payment
- May get up to 3 months of rental assistance
- May cover medical equipment and medicines
- All funds are deposited through direct deposit
- Once you file a claim to have your house damage assessed you will be contacted by FEMA. You must accompany the FEMA assigned inspector to your residence and also provide them with proof of your address. If you do not have a current drivers license or utility bill with that address you may want contact your utility company and ask them to send you a copy of one of your latest bills.
- The website states that once you have the inspection you should receive a notice of results within 10 days.
- Temporary housing may be available.

If you need additional information assistance in locating FEMA information or requesting their assistance, please contact Employee Assistance at the number above.

What happens after my 14 days of assistance with FEMA expires and I haven't received the next step in FEMA assistance?

FEMA and the Employee Alumni Association monies are provided to help with interim lodging and other basic needs such as food, clothing, and diapers. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to call.

Where else can I look for assistance?

In addition to FEMA, there are many agencies that are available to help employees: The Small Business Administration (SBA), Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Red Cross (www.redcross.org). Here are just a few of the areas where they might be of service:

- HUD – special mortgage insurance programs to assist disaster victims. Under this program individuals or families whose residences were destroyed or damaged to such an extent that reconstruction or replacement is necessary are eligible for 100 percent financing. To find out more about this option contact HUD at www.hud.gov
- SBA offers loans for rebuilding also. They have home disaster loans, business physical disaster loans and economic injury disaster loans. To find out more about these programs contact SBA at sba.gov or you can go into one of the disaster recovery centers listed near your location. Disaster recovery centers are listed on the internet. If you don't have access to the internet you can always contact them at 1-800-659-2955.

What should I do if I lost personal property in Hurricane Katrina?

Employees who lost personal property in the hurricane will need to contact their insurance companies to file claims for replacement of lost personal property. There may also be other options for losses not covered by your insurance such as FEMA. Please check with employee assistance if you have questions at 1-985-448-1471.

What about government property lost in the hurricane?

Lost government property will need to be handled through the property management staff at each park has in place. For those parks that have significant loss, this will be a considerable task. Interim property management procedures will be set up to assist the parks. More information about this is coming as the details are worked out. The Incident Management Teams will help the parks set up interim park offices if needed to start this process.

I won't be able to move back into my house anytime soon. Where will I live?

- Check with your insurance company and determine if you have coverage for temporary lodging. If this is not provided in your policy you may want to research the fema.gov website for a listing of available temporary rentals. Some options you may consider are renting a house or apartment, placing an RV or mobile home at your preferred location, living with family, living with National Park Service employees in your state or in other locations.
- The National Park Service is working with FEMA to provide other options. You can contact Employee Assistance for more information at 985-448-1471.
- FEMA can also provide other assistance. See fema.gov for more information on this option..

Temporary Duty Travel:

- If you are displaced from your home and are assigned to work at your park, NPS may put you in travel status. For the first 30 days you will get the meal and lodging rate designated for the area where you are temporarily housed. This varies by location but averages \$100 per day. For the second thirty days you will receive 55% of that rate. This will average about \$55 per day or \$1650 for a month. Please contact Employee Assistance at 985-448-1471 if you have questions.

I don't have a vehicle to get to work. What should I do?

If you have been assigned to work at a park location, a rental or government car may be authorized. If you are not in travel status, check with your supervisor or employee assistance about reimbursement possibilities.

I am using my personal car for government business. Can I be reimbursed?

If you are in travel status and using your own car to commute to your worksite you can be reimbursed for your mileage as part of your travel status reimbursement. Travel will be handled initially by Richard Devenney of the Southeast Regional Office at 404-562-3105.

How soon may I go back to work?

The park's intent is to get everyone back to work as soon as possible. Crews are working diligently to help in the process. There may be immediate opportunities to work with the Incident Management Teams if you want to get involved with rebuilding your park, check with your supervisor. We encourage you to keep communicating with your supervisor about the status of your work site and your return to duty date.

This incident has been emotionally very hard on all of us. I would like to talk to someone about my fears and frustrations.

- The National Park Service has employees who have been trained to provide support to coworkers in dealing with stressful events. They are based at the Wetlands Acadian Cultural Center in Thibodaux, LA, at **985-448-1471**. Just ask to speak with a Peer Supporter.
- The National Park Service has a contract with professional counselors to provide the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). You can call the EAP anytime for assistance free of charge at **1-800-869-0276**. This is completely confidential and paid for by the National Park Service through this contract.

Can you help me find family members or friends?

Unfortunately, we do not have the resources to locate extended family members, past employees, or friends. However, we may be able to help you locate immediate family (contact Employee Assistance at **985-448-1471**). You can also check the family links registry at www.redcross.org or call **1-877-568-3317**. If you need further assistance or run into difficulties, please contact Employee Assistance.

What should I do if I no longer have any uniforms due to the hurricane damage?

Employees can receive an adjusted allowance to help offset the cost of lost uniform garments. Employees should contact the park superintendent who will approve the adjusted allowance. The park superintendent will identify/highlight Hurricane Katrina as the justification for the allowance adjustment. The superintendent will send a letter or e-mail to the Southeast Regional Uniform Coordinator, Marcella Gidson for concurrence. Donated uniforms may also be available from other parks in the near future. Contact Employee Assistance for availability.

Other questions?

Don't hesitate to call the Employee Assistance Team if you have other needs, questions, or concerns. Please know that we will do our best to help you or direct you to helpful resources.

The National Park Service is dedicated to helping their employees through this very trying period. Please let us know if you have unanswered questions or other concerns and we will research and assist you as possible.

Be aware of Fraud/Scams when seeking disaster assistance.

Please be aware that there are some people out there that are parading as government officials. These individuals ask for social security numbers, bank or other personal information. FEMA will collect this information during your initial application and provide you an application number. Do not give bank account information to anyone who calls you on the telephone. There is never a "processing fee" to register for FEMA assistance. Also all disaster officials should show the proper credentials. If in doubt call 1-800-621-3362 and select the helpline option.

**Request for Assistance
from E&AA's Hurricane Katrina Relief Fund**

NPS/Cooperating Association Employee Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Mailing address for check: _____

Bank information if wire transfer is requested:

Exact name on account: _____

Name of Bank: _____

Bank Routing number: _____

Bank Account number: _____

Checking ___ Savings ___ (Indicate whether a checking or savings account)

Park: _____

Immediate Dollar Amount Requested: \$ _____

Long term dollars requested (if funding is available): \$ _____

Please describe the loss or expense incurred due to the hurricane:

Immediate Needs: please describe needs for temporary housing, food, etc:

Estimated Long term needs:(please describe):

Please complete and return to: Hurricane Katrina Relief Fund, E&AA, 470 Maryland Drive, Suite One, Ft. Washington, PA 19034, or fax to 215-283-6923

Employee Signature: _____

NPS Supervisor Acknowledgement of need: _____

FACT SHEET

After a Hurricane or Flood: Cleanup of Flood Water

When returning to your home after a hurricane or flood, be aware that flood water may contain sewage. Protect yourself and your family by following these steps:

Inside the Home

- Keep children and pets out of the affected area until cleanup has been completed
- Wear rubber boots, rubber gloves, and goggles during cleanup of affected area.
- Remove and discard items that cannot be washed and disinfected (such as: mattresses, carpeting, carpet padding, rugs, upholstered furniture, cosmetics, stuffed animals, baby toys, pillows, foam rubber items, books, wall coverings, and most paper products).
- Remove and discard drywall and insulation that has been contaminated with sewage or flood waters.
- Thoroughly clean all hard surfaces (such as flooring, concrete, molding, wood and metal furniture, countertops, appliances, sinks, and other plumbing fixtures) with hot water and laundry or dish detergent.
- Help the drying process by using fans, air conditioning units, and dehumidifiers.
- After completing the cleanup, wash your hands with soap and water. Use water that has been boiled for 1 minute (allow the water to cool before washing your hands).

Or

You may use water that has been disinfected for personal hygiene use (solution of 1/8 teaspoon of household bleach per 1 gallon of water). Let it stand for 30 minutes. If the water is cloudy, use a solution of 1/4 teaspoon of household bleach per 1 gallon of water.

- Wash all clothes worn during the cleanup in hot water and detergent. These clothes should be washed separately from uncontaminated clothes and linens.
- Wash clothes contaminated with flood or sewage water in hot water and detergent. It is recommended that a Laundromat be used for washing large quantities of clothes and linens until your onsite waste-water system has been professionally inspected and serviced.
- Seek immediate medical attention if you become injured or ill.

Outside the Home

- Keep children and pets out of the affected area until cleanup has been completed.
- Wear rubber boots, rubber gloves, and goggles during cleanup of affected area.
- Have your onsite waste-water system professionally inspected and serviced if you suspect damage.
- Wash all clothes worn during the cleanup in hot water and detergent. These clothes should be washed separately from uncontaminated clothes and linens.
- After completing the cleanup, wash you hands with soap and water. Use water that has been boiled for 1 minute (allow the water to cool before washing your hands).

Or

You may use water that has been disinfected for personal hygiene use (solution of 1/9 teaspoon of household bleach per 1 gallon of water). Let it stand for 30 minutes. If the water is cloudy, use solution of 1/4 teaspoon of household bleach per 1 gallon of water.

- Seek immediate medical attention if you become injured or ill.

The information in this fact sheet is general in nature and is not intended to be used as a substitute for professional advice. For more information, please contact your local health department.

For more information, visit www.bt.cdc.gov

Or call CDC at 800-CDC-INFO (English and Spanish) or 888-232-6348 (TTY).

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Employee Contact Information Forms

Employee Contact Information

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Cell: _____

Office: _____

Emergency Contact or someone who will always know how to get in touch with you.

_____	_____
Name	Phone

1. Ask if they are OK?
 2. Do you have lodging? How long will you be there?
 3. Share Employee Alumni Association info (Send Form)
\$ 500.00 individual
\$1,000.00 family. If you can't get supervisory signature submit anyway.
 4. Continuing to get paid on administrative leave.
 5. Ask about banking situation?
- If you bank was impacted, recommend that you set up a bank account and do the direct deposit form and fax it to Leslie Woodie, 404-562-3255 (FAX). Keep a copy for your records.
6. TDY if working – 100% for first 30 days, 55% after that
 7. Can register on family links registry
 - a. www.redcross.org
 - b. 1-877-568-3317

8. Register for FEMA assistance – 3 ways to register – there is going to be a program to provide debit cards
 - a. Internet fema.gov
 - b. 1-800-621-3362
 - c. Evacuation center

If in Louisiana and don't have an address use the one can use Prairie Acadian Cultural Center,
250 W. Park, Eunice, LA

9. School kids?
10. What do you want to do in the short term?
11. What about the long term?
12. Critical Incident Stress Management Team – Peer support to help deal w/impacts on you, your family and friends, to share coping strategies for handling stress. They are based at the Acadian Cultural Center in Lafayette, LA 327-232-0789 ext 17 or 10.

Employee Contact/Follow-Up Form (rev. 9/22/05)

Date/Time: _____
Employee Asst. Name: _____

Employee Name: _____

Other Contact Name: _____

Updated Phone #: _____

Current Mailing Address: _____

1. Employee/Family Status (Verify who is with the employee, including name and age of children, pets):
2. Home Status (Verify Extent of Losses, if known; Determine if SETT escort to visit home is needed):
3. Availability for Work (Determine how soon employee can return to work, and if any communications have taken place with supervisor):
4. NPS Housing near the Barataria NHP (Verify interest in government-provided housing; also how many bedrooms, whether there are pets, and do they need transportation):
5. If interested in housing, obtain FEMA #:
6. Other Comments/Notes:
7. Items for Follow-up:

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CISM/PEER Information

Support Available for Hurricane Responders

As the KatrinaRita Recovery Incident continues, it becomes essential to express our thanks to all of the nearly 1,200 employees who have put forth time and effort to help the recovery progress. This includes all park employees, as everyone has had and continues to have a hand in making the process possible. Whether or not you were on the ground in an affected area, working with those on the ground (either for the NPS or any other agency involved), or backfilling at your home unit, it has been invaluable in creating the effective response that has been seen. These efforts are greatly appreciated and recognized. As a park family, we want to ensure that all assigned KatrinaRita personnel are doing well and have readjusted to their primary duties. EAP is always available if an issue arises. They can be contacted on the local level, through your HR specialist. In addition, we realize the extensiveness of the situation you've been through and the possible stress-related effects you may be experiencing. These normal reactions to an abnormal situation may affect many areas of your life. As part of the Critical Incident Stress Management Program (CISM), we have available to you peer supporters who can offer assistance if you feel it is something you want. The purpose of CISM is to offer you an opportunity to talk about the stress you've dealt with and to provide you some tools in managing that stress. It is a confidential process that is available to anyone. If you'd like to talk with a peer supporter, feel free to contact Pam McMillan, CISM Program Coordinator, at 559-760-5085. She will arrange to have someone on the team contact you confidentially.

Contact Information

Name: Gordon Wissinger, IC, East Team

PEER SUPPORT IS HERE!

The National Park Service has deployed a Critical Incident Stress Management (CI SM) team to the region to lend a helping hand. To give you time to talk about KATRINA and it's impact on you, your family, your friends, and you work, and to share coping strategies for handling stress of this magnitude.

Please feel free to contact us

Our base of operations is

The Wetlands Acadian Visitor Center

Thibodaux, LA

985-448-1471

Just ask to speak with a PEER Supporter!

THE CI SM TEAM

Rick Pearce 717-253-4358

Elizabeth Maki

Coping with the Aftermath of a Flood/Hurricane

Floods and hurricanes can leave a trail of structural destruction, but what about the emotional impact? The full force of the disaster is often realized after the floodwaters and winds recede and emergency crews go home. In addition to the clean-up efforts, it's important that you devote time to restoring your own emotional wellness. Feelings of grief, despair and frustration are normal reactions to such events. Other emotions you may be experiencing include:

- Panic/Feeling out of control
- Shock/Numbness
- Despair and sadness
- Disorientation/Confusion
- Guilt
- Difficulty concentrating
- Anger and irritability
- Anxiety/Uncertainty
- Fatigue

Coping Tips

Following the coping Techniques outlined below can help you deal with the range of emotions you are most likely experiencing:

- Be extra patient. Don't expect things to instantly restore themselves. Accept that restoration (both physical and emotional) takes time.
- Realize that you will experience a range of emotions, and moods can change unexpectedly.
- Don't overlook the feelings of children as you deal with the situation. They need to feel that they can count on you for extra attention, love and support.
- Try to keep your family's meals as nourishing as possible for needed energy.
- Focus on the big picture instead of the little details and little problems. It will give you a sense of competency.
- Talk with friends, family, counselors or members of the clergy. In crisis situations, a supportive network is essential.
- Try to get at least seven to eight hours of sleep a night to refresh your mind and body for the next day's activities.
- Make a list of things that need to be done and rank them by what needs to be done first, second, third, etc.
- Learn acceptance. Don't worry about things you cannot control. Conserve your energies for things you can control.
- Be willing to "tell your story" and to be a listener to others as they tell their story so that you and they can release the stress a little bit at a time in disaster wake.
- Taking every day one-at-a-time is essential in disaster's wake. Each day is a new opportunity to FILL-UP; Focus Inwardly on what's most important to you and your family today; Look and Listen to learn what you and your significant others are experiencing, so you'll remember what important and let go of what's not; Understand Personally what these experiences mean to you as a part of your life, so that you will feel able to go on with your life and even grow personally.

Resources Are Available

For further information and support you may wish to contact your Employee Assistance Program or Personnel Office. You can also talk with someone you can trust, such as a doctor or nurse, local mental health professional, or member of the clergy.

How Children Deal with Traumatic Events

Children and adolescents may be less able to discuss and work through their feelings, although they are very likely to feel upset by what happened. Children want to feel in control of their lives. They also want to feel safe, secure, and protected by the adults around them.

The lists below are not all-inclusive, but do provide a guide of behaviors that may indicate that a child is reacting to the event:

Pre-school: this age finds it particularly hard to adjust to changes and loss. In addition, these youngsters have not yet developed their own coping skills, so they must depend on parents to help them through difficult times. Very young children may regress to an earlier behavioral stage such as: excessive crying, thumbsucking, clinging, loss of bowel or bladder control, and nightmares. Other actions may also include a fear of strangers, fear of being left alone, irritability, and confusion.

Age 6 – 11 years: Children aged 6 – 11 may have some of the same reactions as younger boys and girls. In addition they may compete more for the attention of parents and have a fear of going to school. Other changes may include headaches (or other physical complaints), depression, confusion, inability to concentrate, fears about safety, fear of being left alone, fear of strangers, poor school performance, withdrawal from family/friends, and nightmares.

Age 12 – 17 years: Children 12 – 17 are likely to have vague physical complaints when under stress and may abandon chores, school work, and other responsibilities they previously handled. Other changes may include headaches (or other physical complaints), appetite changes, sleep disturbances, emotional turmoil, feelings of inadequacy & helplessness, fears and concerns about safety, and withdrawal from friends & family.

Helping Children Deal with Traumatic Events

What You Can Do To Help

A guide for parents & teachers

- 1) Encourage the child to describe the event in terms of what he or she (1) saw, heard, & smelled (2) thought (3) felt. This discussion can help to correct any misperceptions the child may have had about the incident.
- 2) If the child is experiencing helplessness and hopelessness; you can ask the child to write or tell of their current feelings. Have the child record pleasant thoughts 3 to 4 times a day for a few weeks.
- 3) If the child is losing interest and experiencing a “blue mood”, arrange an interesting activity or plan for future special events.
- 4) If the child has lost their appetite don't force them to eat. Prepare their favorite foods and make meal-time a pleasant occasion.
- 5) For children who experience sleep difficulties – keep regular bed-time hours; do relaxing and calming activities one hour before bed-time such as reading or listening to soft music; end the day with a positive experience.
- 6) For children who are agitated and restless – change activities causing agitation; teach the child relaxation techniques; massage may help. Encourage physical exercise and recreation activities.
- 7) For children experiencing excessive fears – minimize anxiety-causing situations and uncertainty; be supportive and reassuring. Plan things out so the child has a sense of safety in knowing what is coming next.
- 8) If the child is demonstrating aggressive behavior and anger – use a kind but firm approach to let your child know that the behavior is unacceptable. Let your child know that their emotions are normal, but encourage your child to express his or her anger in appropriate ways. Do not react in anger. Let your child know that many emotions are normal responses to trauma such as sadness, guilt, loneliness, fear, pain, and isolation.

How can parents recognize when to seek professional help?

- If a sleeping problem continues for more than a few weeks
- If the clinging behavior does not diminish
- If the child's fears become worse

The Long-term Impact of a Traumatic Event: What to Expect in Your Personal, Family, Work, and Financial Life

The impact of a disaster or traumatic event goes far beyond the immediate devastation caused by the initial destruction. Just as it takes time to reconstruct damaged buildings, it takes time to grieve and rebuild our lives. Life may not return to normal for months, or even years, following a disaster or traumatic event. There may be changes in living conditions that cause changes in day-to-day activities, leading to strains in relationships, changes in expectations, and shifts in responsibilities. These disruptions in relationships, roles, and routines can make life unfamiliar or unpredictable.

A disaster or traumatic event can have far-reaching effects in several major areas of our lives, making rebuilding our emotional lives extremely difficult. However, sometimes just knowing what to expect can help ease the transition back to a normal life. As you and your family begin to rebuild your lives, you may face any or all of the situations described below:

Personal Uncertainties

- Feeling mentally drained and physically exhausted is normal and common.
- The loss of a home, business, or income may result in a loss of self-esteem
- Unresolved emotional issues or pre-existing problems and previous losses may resurface.
- Anniversaries of the disaster or traumatic event remind us of our losses. This reaction may be triggered by the event date each month and may be especially strong on the 1-year anniversary.

Family Relationship Changes

- Relationships may become stressed when everyone's emotions are closer to the surface, and conflicts with spouses and other family members may increase.
- When homes are destroyed or damaged, families may have to live in temporary housing or with relatives and friends, leading to overcrowding and added tension.
- Family members or friends may be forced to move out of the area, disrupting relationships and usual support systems.
- Parents may be physically or emotionally unavailable to their children following a disaster or traumatic event, because they are busy cleaning up or are preoccupied, distracted, or distressed by difficulties related to the event.
- Parents may become overprotective of their children and their children's safety.
- Children may be expected to take on more adult roles, such as watching siblings or helping with cleanup efforts, leaving less time to spend with friends or participate in routine activities, such as summer camp or field trips.
- Fatigue and increased stress from preoccupation with personal issues can lead to poor work performance.
- Conflicts with co-workers may increase, due to the added stress.
- Businesses may be forced to lay off employees, or company work hours and wages may be cut.
- Reduced income may require taking a second job.
- Daily travel and commute patterns are disrupted, due to the loss of a car or road reconstruction.

Financial Worries

- Those who experience work disruptions may be unable to regain their previous standard of living, leading to financial concerns and unpaid bills.
- Seeking financial assistance to rebuild and repair damages adds to the already high levels of stress caused by the disaster or traumatic event, and the hassles of dealing with bureaucracy can add to the frustration.

How to Be a Survivor

Regardless of individual circumstances, everyone needs to complete several steps on the road to recovery from a disaster or traumatic event:

- Accept the reality of the loss.
- Allow yourself and other family members to feel sadness and grief over what has happened.
- Adjust to a new environment. Acknowledge that the person or possessions lost are gone forever.
- Put closure to the situation and move on. Do not continue to let the loss take its physical, emotional, or spiritual toll.
- Have faith in better times to come.

You and your family have survived a traumatic event. That doesn't mean your lives are over or that you don't deserve to be happy again. Return to doing things you enjoy with friends and as a family. Reestablish the routines of your life. Make commitments and keep them.

If you or a member of your family still have trouble coping on your own, ask for help. Consult a counselor or mental health professional. In the workplace, you may be able to get assistance from your human resources department or your company's Employee Assistance Program. For help with financial matters, contact a financial advisor.

HELPING EMPLOYEES COPE

A Guide for Co-workers & Supervisors

After a Critical Incident

What can you do when a co-worker is either the victim of or a witness to a traumatic event? You may feel awkward or embarrassed. You may have your own feelings about the event that are difficult to resolve. Most of all, you may simply feel that you don't know what to say. The tips below may help you formulate a response that shows your co-worker that you care and want to be supportive.

- 1) **Acknowledge the event.** Pretending that nothing happened may seem like the easiest thing to do, but it won't help affected individuals recover. You may want to acknowledge the event with a small ritual, such as sending flowers or making a donation.
- 2) **Don't ask questions, just listen.** Asking detailed questions about what happened usually comes across as ghoulish and intrusive. If your co-worker wants to talk about the event, just listen. He or she may repeat the details many times; this is often an important part of healing. But if he or she is not yet ready to talk about it, don't push.
- 3) **Offer long-term emotional support.** It takes longer to recover from a trauma than most people realize. For instance, a year might seem like enough time to "get over it" yet the first anniversary is often very difficult for people.
- 4) **Offer practical support.** Instead of catch-all "If there's anything I can do..." offer to do specific things such as give rides to and from work, run errands, pick up part of their workload (check with the boss first) or other helpful things.
- 5) **Watch for signs of abnormal reactions.** Behavior that would usually be considered strange is quite normal at a time like this: irrational anger, crying spells, a period of seeming to be okay followed by a relapse, etc. But if your co-worker seems to be seriously disturbed, if the symptoms go on for weeks, and if he or she is not in counseling, then the manager or EAP counselor may need to get involved.

What to say	What not to say
"Would you like to talk about it?"	"I understand how you feel."
"This must be very painful for you."	"What happened? You'll feel better if you talk about it!"
"We're glad to have you back." "Don't worry about work while you're gone. We'll take care of things for you."	"When this happened to me..." (your co-worker needs someone to "listen" to them, not talk at them.)

coping strategies

- Helping Your Family Member Cope -

Your loved one has been involved in a highly challenging event, sometimes known as a **“critical incident”**. He/she may be in the process of adjusting to this event. Exposure to a critical incident may produce changes in your loved one's behavior and their physical, cognitive, and emotional functioning. These changes are common and signal that they are beginning the process of adjusting to an event that may have been temporarily overwhelming.

All the parts of our lives overlap and influence each other: personal, professional, past, present, etc. The impact of a critical incident may be relieved by those who love us the most. So, don't underestimate your importance in your loved one's recovery. Listed below are some hints, which may prove helpful over the next few days or weeks.

- Be ready to listen and reassure when your loved one is ready to talk. Talking is the best medicine. But don't pressure your loved one to talk. Let them know you are there when they are ready.
- Don't avoid the subject. When your loved one is ready to talk, don't avoid the situation.
- You may not understand what your loved one is going through, but offer your love and support. Ask what you can do to help.
- Be patient. Your loved one may go through many mood changes - understand that this is part of the healing process for them.
- To be an effective source of support, you must receive support as well. Alert your friends that you may need some extra TLC in the coming days.
- Be supportive and non-judgmental. We truly don't know what the other person feels or understand why they react the way they do.
- Laugh. Use humor to lighten things up when possible.
- Validate the person. Give them hugs, offer praise, remind them how much they are appreciated, how important they are.
- Keep to your routines. Try to continue your normal home life as much as possible. Encourage your loved one to participate in routine things.
- Give your loved one time. Each one of us heals differently, handles stress differently. Allow your loved one all the time necessary to heal from this event.
- Keep an eye on them. Be aware of how your loved one is coping with this critical incident. Don't be afraid to seek professional help if you are concerned about how your loved one is doing.

WARNING SIGNS OF STRESS

You have been involved in an event that may have produced strong reactions in you. These reactions are not only normal; they are actually part of the process of adjusting to this extreme challenge. These responses can be very different from each other and from what other people are experiencing. And, these responses can happen immediately or they can appear days or weeks after the event.

The signs and symptoms of a stress reaction may last a few days, a few weeks or a few months and occasionally longer depending on the severity of the event. However, with support and understanding from loved ones, stress reactions usually pass more quickly.

Here are some very common signs and signals of a stress reaction.

PHYSICAL CHANGES	COGNITIVE CHANGES	EMOTIONAL CHANGES	BEHAVIORAL CHANGES
Fatigue	Confusion	Anxiety	Nervous laughter
Nausea or vomiting	Poor attention	Quilt	Sleep disturbances
Muscle tremors or muscle twitches	Poor decision making skills	Loss of emotional control	Change in speech patterns
Chest pain*	Poor concentration	Denial	Suspiciousness
Headaches	Memory problems	Fear	Antisocial acts
Chills or profuse sweating	Poor problem solving skills	Inappropriate emotional reactions	Pacing or restlessness
Muffled hearing	Nightmares	Uncertainty	Erratic movements
Rapid heart beat or elevated BP	Difficulty identifying familiar objects or people	Feeling overwhelmed	Isolation or change in communication
Grinding of teeth	Loss of time or place	Apprehension	Startled reflexes
Visual difficulties	Disturbed drinking	Intense anger	Emotional outbursts
Neck and back pains	Poor abstract thinking	Irritability, agitation, et.	Hypersensitive
Difficulty breathing*	Heightened or lowered alertness	Depression and/or grief	Increased alcohol, drug, or smoking
Dizziness or fainting	Blaming someone		

* These are definite signs to seek medical attention.

Occasionally, the event is so painful that professional assistance from a counselor may be necessary. This does not imply craziness or weakness. It simply indicates that the particular event was just too powerful for the person to manage by himself or herself.

COPING TECHNIQUES

10 SECONDS TO RELAXATION:

- DEEP BREATHING – sit comfortably, breath through your nose to a count of 4, hold for a count of 6, exhale, through your mouth for a county of 8.
- SUPER SHAKE – jiggle your arms, letting your muscles ripple like a swimmer getting ready to compete. Jiggle each leg while keeping your arms moving.
- SPREAD EAGLE – in a big, comfy chair lounge back, spreading out your legs and letting your arms flop down. Slightly lean your head back and let out all your breath. Close your eyes and soar above the earth.
- RAG DOLL – stand up, then bend over from the waist and hang down like a floppy rag doll. Do not bounce or jerk. As your muscles relax, your hands will reach closer to the floor without effort. RELAX!
- WHOLE-BODY TENSING – sit up straight. Then tense every muscle in your whole body, all at once for 5 seconds. Frown; clench your fists, toes, and everything in between! Then completely relax into the “Spread Eagle” position.
- ISOMETRICS – push palms together or push against a wall. Interlock fingers and try to pull them apart. Try to push two walls of a room apart by extending your arms.
- SHOULDER SQUEEZE – for neck and shoulder tension. Get a friend to squeeze the large muscle along the top of your shoulders. This squeeze should be quite firm and repeated 3 times until tension releases.

LONGER THAN 10 SECONDS:

- IMAGINE – while sitting in a relaxed way; in your mind take a trip to a favorite place...perhaps to a beach or to the mountains. Mentally use all 5 senses acutely...hear the sea gulls touch some sand, smell the salt in the air. Stay on vacation for 10 to 15 minutes.
- THERAPUETIC MASSAGE – treat yourself to one! You are worth it!
- NAPS – take a “power” nap of no more than 20 minutes. Close your eyes, breathe deeply and let your mind go completely blank. Send thoughts away until your mind is completely empty and you seem to be “floating”. Set up alarm for 15-20 minutes. Do not think of anything. Learn to just “be”.
- YOGA or TAI CHI – these are 2 centering techniques that relax and stretch you, increase blood circulation and decrease fatigue. Try them!

Stress Busters

Things to try!

1. Eat at least one hot, balanced meal a day
2. Get 7 to 8 hrs of sleep at least 4 nights a week
3. Give & receive affection regularly
4. Exercise to the point of perspiration at least 3 times a week
5. Limit yourself to fewer than 5 alcoholic drinks a week
6. Be of appropriate weight for your height
7. Get strength from your spiritual beliefs
8. Develop new friends & acquaintances
9. Find 1 or more close friends to confide in about personal matters
10. Learn to organize your time effectively
11. Limit your caffeine intake
12. Take quiet time for yourself
13. Develop an optimistic outlook on life
14. Monitor your health - get regular check-ups
15. Do something fun at least once a week
16. Learn to speak openly about your feelings

Grieving Children

How to help the child whose parent has died

The stages of grieving:

1. **Early response** – denial, shock, numbness
2. **Acute grief** – sadness, depression, anger, guilt, anxiety, fears, regression, physical distress
3. **Adjustment** – painful acceptance, reorganization, & reestablishment of life patterns

What is the child feeling and how can you help?

Infants up to 2 years old:

- The baby will sense the loss of the missing parent & will react to the change in emotional atmosphere in the home. Their sense of security is upset. Responses may include: irritability, excessive crying, change in eating habits, bowel/bladder problems, emotional withdrawal.
- ✓ Provide a secure & stable environment, follow a schedule, hold the child often, play with the child

Preschoolers - Ages 3 to 5:

- The child's normal fears at this age will be intensified (such as fear of going to sleep, of being alone, etc.); the child may regress to old behaviors such as thumbsucking, clinging, inability to tie their shoes; physiological difficulties such as lack of bladder or bowel control, stomachaches, headaches, or rashes. Their emotions will be stressed and there may be outbursts of anger, anxiety, crying, and intense sadness.
- ✓ Talk openly & honestly with the child. Spend a great deal of time answering their questions since they have a limited understanding of death & time. Don't be shocked or surprised by their questions – they are slowly trying to sort through this loss. Encourage the child to talk with others, or to write & draw their feelings. Spend time just hugging, comforting, & reassuring the child.

The grade school child - Ages 6 to 10:

- The concept of death is more understandable at this age and the child will have to deal with the reality of the death. Grief will continue to resurface at this age especially since they will be going to school and will be asked numerous questions by other students. Anger could also increase while the child tries to process the death, deal with the grief, and handle the added stresses school can create.

School related struggles could include: poor grades, anger towards teacher or classmates, socially inappropriate behavior in class, or physical ailments.

- ✓ The child at this age needs a great deal of understanding. They need simple, honest, and accurate information. They need to be able to process the grief over and over again. Help them deal with their anger by talking to them about it, sharing your feelings. Prepare the teachers and the child for the questions they will face when they return to school.

The Adolescent: Ages 10 to 18

- Their understanding of the concept of death matures. The death of a parent may cause the child to doubt their self-worth. They may face struggles of self-concept and their value in the family. They may attempt to act "mature" for their age to adjust to the loss. The child may try to hide their feelings. They may begin to "act out" such as rebelling against authority, fighting with other children, dropping old friends, etc.
- ✓ Discourage adult responsibility. The child should continue with his or her routine chores but do not add new responsibilities. You must encourage the child to express their feelings. Peer support groups can help because adolescents can sometimes talk easier in front of peers. Encourage the child to exercise – physical activity can help to release some of the penned up emotions.

FOR ALL AGES

Remember: special occasions bring back grief (birthdays, Christmas, holidays, etc.). This is normal and should be viewed as healthy. Don't ignore the occasion – do something special that will honor the memory of the one who died.

**Children are resilient. With understanding and support,
they will come through their grief in a healthy and maturing way.**

Dealing With Your Grief

1. Talk to friends, family, and/or your spouse about how you feel. Share your feelings!
2. Resume old and new relationships.
3. Eat a balanced diet; avoid junk food.
4. Drink plenty of water and juices. Avoid alcohol and caffeine.
5. Exercise daily – bike, jog, swim, walk.
6. Get your rest and resume normal sleep patterns.
7. Avoid making big decisions or changes in your life.
8. Admit to yourself and your family when you need help.
9. Accept other's help! Give specific things they can do for you (such as grocery shopping, child care, keeping you company, etc.).
10. Allow family and friends to share your grief and let them offer their support.
11. Get a physical exam about 4 months after the loss. Your body suffers a great deal when going through grief; take good care of your body.
12. Avoid long trips – you may not have the ability to cope to the changes experienced when traveling for long periods of time.
13. Don't put away a loved one's things until you are ready.
14. Attend a support group. Others who have "been there" can give support, help, and hope. They can better understand how you are feeling.
15. Request help or support from your clergy to help renew your faith and hope.

A cut finger is numb before it bleeds; it bleeds before it hurts, it hurts until it begins to heal, it forms a scab and itches until finally the scab is gone and a small scar is left where once there was a wound. Grief is the deepest wound you have ever had. Like a cut finger, it goes through healing stages, and leaves a scar.



Helping Yourself Heal

- ✓ Understand that whatever you are experiencing right now is normal. You are not losing your mind!
- ✓ Allow yourself to remember – don't close off the memories, the tears, or the pain. It hurts, but it **will** pass.
- ✓ Experiencing your pain proves you are alive and able to feel. Trying to avoid the pain actually takes more effort & energy.
- ✓ Talk about your feelings! Find someone you trust, someone who will listen without analyzing or offering pat solutions.
- ✓ Recognize that people grieve differently so don't compare reactions or responses to yours.
- ✓ Be gentle with yourself – give to yourself the same loving kindness you would give to a friend.
- ✓ Remember that healing has both progression & regression. There will be dramatic leaps forward and times of backsliding.
- ✓ Plan your days out. Try to schedule your time so that you have a balance of structure and flexibility.
- ✓ Try to avoid major decisions. You are vulnerable right now and your judgment may be cloudy.
- ✓ Give yourself time – it takes as long as it takes! Avoid setting deadlines for your healing.
- ✓ Reaffirm your beliefs and values – search your faith, lean on it, and allow it to grow.
- ✓ Recognize that one day you will feel better and that this can be an opportunity to examine and possibly create positive changes in your life.

The Healing Process

The healing process is different for each person. Moving through the healing process requires acknowledging a painful reality and integrating it into your life in a meaningful way. This may require a lot of time and patience. The following points may help you in understanding the healing process:

1. **Make a connection between the event and your response.** The response to a trauma may be immediate or delayed, mild or intense. It may include a strong connection to another event that caused feelings of loss or helplessness. It is crucial to have the support of others when you begin to make the connection between your pain and the event. Try not to seal off your reactions and feelings.
2. **Find a safe environment for emotional sharing.** A very natural human response to trauma is to deny or "wall off" the painful reaction. While you may need privacy to deal with events and feelings in your own way and your own time, you also need to talk about these feelings. Share them with your friends, family and colleagues, or with a counselor or trauma specialist.
3. **Make an effort to think the event through, either individually or in a group.** It's important to be able to acknowledge your feelings of sadness, anger, confusion, or guilt. If others went through the trauma also, talking about it together could help all of you begin to cope with the aftermath of the event.
4. **Ask the questions that don't have easy answers.** It is all right to express the questions you have bottled up inside. For example: "Why does it always have to happen to the good guy?" "How could someone do this?"
5. **Allow memories of painful events in the past to surface, even if you feel that you have already dealt with them.** A new trauma can bring back memories of an old trauma. Although it may seem unfair, an incident can make you remember and sometimes rework experiences that don't usually intrude into your everyday life. This is normal. By consciously remembering and re-experiencing the painful events, the memories will eventually recede into the background. The mistake is to push them down again too fast, too soon.
6. **Examine for yourself, as an individual as well as a member of the group, what this event means for you.** We need to examine our values more closely. This helps encourage acceptance of a new, more difficult reality and the beginning of being able to move on with life. As an example: "As a result of this, we recognize how important we are to one another and how little time we spend communicating."

The healing process doesn't always proceed in a straight line. You may seem to be recovering, but then something – the anniversary of the incident, or hearing about a similar incident can cause a setback. But if you keep in mind these points about the healing process, you'll be better equipping to eventually work through the pain.

Self-Care Tips for Survivors of a Traumatic Event: What to Expect in Your Personal, Family, Work, and Financial Life

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- Relationships may become stressed when everyone's emotions are closer to the surface, and conflicts with spouses and other family members may increase.
- When homes are destroyed or damaged, families may have to live in temporary housing or with relatives and friends, leading to overcrowding and added tension.
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- Fatigue and increased stress from preoccupation with personal issues can lead to poor work performance.
- Conflicts with co-workers may increase, due to the added stress.
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- Those who experience work disruptions may be unable to regain their previous standard of living, leading to financial concerns and unpaid bills.
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Regardless of individual circumstances, everyone needs to complete several steps on the road to recovery from a disaster or traumatic event:

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- Allow yourself and other family members to feel sadness and grief over what has happened.
- Adjust to a new environment. Acknowledge that the person or possessions lost are gone forever.
- Put closure to the situation and move on. Do not continue to let the loss take its physical, emotional, or spiritual toll.
- Have faith in better times to come.

You and your family have survived a traumatic event. That doesn't mean your lives are over or that you don't deserve to be happy again. Return to doing things you enjoy with friends and as a family. Reestablish the routines of your life. Make commitments and keep them.

If you or a member of your family still have trouble coping on your own, ask for help. Consult a counselor or mental health professional. In the workplace, you may be able to get assistance from your human resources department or your company's Employee Assistance Program. For help with financial matters, contact a financial advisor.

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10/02

Helping Children Cope with Fear and Anxiety

Whether tragic events touch your family personally or are brought into your home via newspapers and television, you can help children cope with the anxiety that violence, death, and disasters can cause.

Listening and talking to children about their concerns can reassure them that they will be safe. Start by encouraging them to discuss how they have been affected by what is happening around them. Even young children may have specific questions about tragedies. Children react to stress at their own developmental level.

The Caring for Every Child's Mental Health Campaign offers these pointers for parents and other caregivers:

- **Encourage children to ask questions.** Listen to what they say. Provide comfort and assurance that address their specific fears. It's okay to admit you can't answer all of their questions.

- **Talk on their level.** Communicate with your children in a way they can understand. Don't get too technical or complicated.

- **Find out what frightens them.** Encourage your children to talk about fears they may have. They may worry that someone will harm them at school or that someone will try to hurt *you*.

- **Focus on the positive.** Reinforce the fact that most people are kind and caring. Remind your child of the heroic actions taken by ordinary people to help victims of tragedy.

- **Pay attention.** Your children's play and drawings may give you a glimpse into their questions or concerns. Ask them to tell you what is going on in the game or the picture. It's an opportunity to clarify any misconceptions, answer questions, and give reassurance.

- **Develop a plan.** Establish a family emergency plan for the future, such as a meeting place where everyone should gather if something unexpected happens in your family or neighborhood. It can help you and your children feel safer.

If you are concerned about your child's reaction to stress or trauma, call your physician or a community mental health center.

The Caring for Every Child's Mental Health Campaign is part of The Comprehensive Community Mental Health Services for Children and Their Families Program of the Federal Center for Mental Health Services. Parents and caregivers who wish to learn more about mental wellbeing in children should call 1-800-789-2647 (toll-free) or visit www.mentalhealth.org/child to download a free publications catalog (Order No. CA-0000). The Federal Center for Mental Health Services is an agency of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Hurricane Blues Provide Valuable Lessons

Deb Boehme, PhD, EMT-I, LPC, DOM

The purpose of this article is two-fold. The number one reason is to share, from a field experience perspective with both Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, how effective CISM can be both during and after a natural disaster. The second reason is to address, once again, some of the misconceptions regarding “inappropriate” use of CISM that were cited in a September 27th, 2005 *Journal of Emergency Medical Services (JEMS)* article entitled, “Trying to Reason with Hurricane Season” by Bryan E. Bledsoe, DO, FACEP.

Our New Mexico Disaster Medical Assistance (NM – 1 DMAT) team was deployed to back-toback Hurricanes and was the only one to stay with patients during the crux of the confusion at the Superdome in New Orleans. Due to prior commitments at my Department of Health state job, I did not join the team until one week into the Katrina deployment and missed the Superdome experience. As one can imagine, it was terribly difficult to sit in New Mexico while our team was literally in the line of fire there. I connected with the team in Baton Rouge at the Louisiana State University campus. As a member of that team, I filled the roster as both a mental health provider and EMT.

While at the Superdome, NM-1 DMAT treated almost 1,000 patients during a three-day period while working with no electricity, defibrillators, ventilator machines, cardiac medications, flushing toilets, or food and water. In addition, they worked 20-hour shifts in 110-degree weather and with the fire alarms activated for 18 continuous hours as our team worked or attempted to sleep. Once I arrived in Baton Rouge, one my first duties was to touch base with each of my team members to see how they were coping with what they had experienced in the New Orleans mission.

In the *JEMS* article, it states, “First and foremost, EMS managers should do their homework before involving their personnel in Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM), particularly the defusing and debriefing elements.” Anyone that has been trained under the auspices of the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF) and the CISM structure knows when to use the proper techniques related to CISM. When I touched base with our team, the only proper protocols to engage in at that time were the Crisis Management Briefing (CMB) or perhaps oneonones since we were working 12 hours shifts. Some team members needed to talk about what they saw in more detail than others, but over all, everyone was able to put the experience in perspective and function in a productive manner.

During our Baton Rouge mission, we worked with a state-sponsored DMAT team from Illinois. Over a six-day period, we triaged 15,000 patients and treated 9,000 of those triaged. I had the opportunity to conduct several interventions for other personnel with us including the Veterinary Medical Assistance Team (VMAT). They had one of the most difficult jobs as they had to make moral and ethical decision related to euthanizing animals. Our team lost patients in the Superdome but it was due to the fact that either the patients had injuries incompatible with life or just the fact that proper medical equipment was unavailable. On the other hand, the veterinarians had to make decisions based on a set of criteria, and it was very difficult for them to justify taking the life of someone’s pet.

Since our DMAT team was housed in the same facility with VMAT, I had the opportunity to see them bring animals to our building. I also had the opportunity to conduct several one-on-ones and many indicated that they did not know that something like CISM even existed. I received four follow-up emails when I returned home and all of them indicated how much easier their transition was back into their “real world” as a result of having someone to talk with that understood what they had experienced. All of them had been on other deployments and they felt that this one was much easier to cope with even though it had been one of their toughest deployments.

On our Hurricane Rita deployment, I had many opportunities to work directly with patients that came through our makeshift ER at a local hospital in Woodville, Texas. We took over patient care for three days while the hospital staff went home to care for their own families and personal losses. We worked in over 100-degree heat with no air conditioning and all of our electricity was from the generators that were brought with us in our caches. We also provided over 100 tons of medical equipment and provided treatment for many conditions ranging from simple dehydration to chainsaw lacerations to cardiac arrests to assaults. When the hospital staff returned, I also had a chance on both the day and night shifts to conduct one-on-ones with the staff. They requested printed information to share with their families because they personally felt so much better after the intervention and believed the information could similarly help their family members. I worked directly with one family that included a three year old with nightmares related to the hurricane-induced tornado that hit Woodville. By the end of our deployment, he was doing much better and was experiencing very little anxiety related to his mother returning to work.

The *JEMS* article indicated that the World Health Organization (WHO) issued a consensus paper on the mental and social aspects of survivors of extreme stressors and concluded, “Because of the negative effects, it is not wise to organize forms of single-session psychological debriefings.” Again, this comment perpetuates the misconception that anyone advocates the use of single session debriefings as the appropriate intervention in these situations. In fact, according to ICISF protocol, a debriefing is a seven-step process (except in the cases of LODD or other specialty debriefings) conducted with a homogeneous group 24-72 hours after the event.

When conducting interventions with the hospital employees from Hurricane Rita, I utilized the ICISF SAFER-R protocol and it produced no negative effects at all. In fact, those personnel returned the next day and brought additional staff who they felt could also benefit. On the day that we closed out our operation, the hospital gave us one of the most heartfelt farewells that I have ever been involved in. Even though they had no computer capability, they generated a hand-written plaque thanking us for taking care of their needs in all realms including the physical, emotional and spiritual aspects.

It is also interesting that in the *JEMS* article, Dr. Bledsoe states, “Now that CISM/CISD has been determined to be ineffective and possibly harmful, what should be done for victims and resources?” He then goes on to discuss the “new” terminology of “psychological first aid.” I took my first CISM training in the early 1990s and psychological first aid was a key term in what was referred to at the time as the “Mitchell Model.” Psychological first aid is NOT a new concept and as one of the options under the CISM model, psychological readiness and a resiliency-based model were incorporated under the auspices of “pre-incident education.” ICISF has always

professed that having pre-existing stress management strategies and a personal support system is one of the most effective measures that can be utilized to prevent problems after exposure to a critical incident.

In the state of New Mexico, we believe in this concept and have a “psychosocial readiness” component of both our Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Bioterrorism Grant and our state All-Hazards Plan. We have a 50-member state-sponsored CISM team and literally thousands of individuals trained in all levels of CISM. In addition, we have Memorandums of Agreement (MOAs) with 15 state agencies that provide CISM services under the auspices of the Department of Health (DOH). CISM is also a core component of our EMT and State Police curriculums. It is interesting that Dr. Bledsoe indicated that the American Red Cross (ARC) also joined in the consensus that CISM/CISD was not effective. Yet they are key players in every one of our state strategic planning meetings. Additionally, both the ARC and the NM CISM teams are cross trained in both Basic and Advanced CISM and Disaster Mental Health through the ARC. Many of us are also trained under the National Organization of Victim Assistance protocol.

ICISF has always professed that no one would play nine holes of golf with only one club, so why would one ever attempt to perform crisis intervention with only one technique? In a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) forum, ICISF stated that CISM can cause harm if used inappropriately. If a person is allergic to penicillin and ingests it, it can cause harm. That is why there are many forms of antibiotics. Similarly, there are many choices for CISM interventions ranging from preincident education, to one-on-ones, defusings, debriefings, CMBs, family support and referrals and resources. Many of you may recall that when Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) was introduced years ago as a successful treatment for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), many considered it the work of the “devil.” It is now recognized as one of the most successful therapies in our practice but it took years to prove its worth.

One final suggestion is that individuals that criticize certain models or protocols should exercise their rights to NOT engage in their use. If one feels uncomfortable with the CISM process and has no field experience, then they should not attempt any of the techniques without proper training. I would encourage everyone to read the most current *Critical Incident Stress Debriefing: An Operations Manual for CISD, Defusing and Other Group Crisis Intervention Services*, Third Edition, and/or contact ICISF for any additional information. Before one sits in the ivory tower and casts stones, one should trudge the fields. As an Approved Instructor and Liaison Coordinator for ICISF, the way that I measure success is simple – if a person looks and appears to be doing better after an intervention – they probably are.

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**Critical Incident Stress
Services Scope of Work**

CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS SERVICES

SCOPE OF WORK

1. Introduction

The National Park Service recognizes that emergency operations are known to generate extreme levels of stress in some persons. Persons involved in emergency operations are exposed to a multitude of incidents that produce unusually strong emotional reactions. Significant events may also produce a variety of undesirable behavioral, social, or emotional problems in some employees. The Jean Lafitte, New Orleans Jazz, Gulf Islands and Big Thicket Superintendents acknowledge the need to mitigate this stress and provide Critical Incident Stress (CIS) assistance to their employees through the services of a professional psychologist, and trained peer counselors. There are approximately 125 employees at these parks that have been affected by events associated with Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. This contract supplements, but is not intended to replace, other Employee Assistance Programs in effect for Jean Lafitte (JELA), New Orleans Jazz (JAZZ), Big Thicket(BITH) and Gulf Islands (GUIS) parks.

2. Government Representatives

Superintendents/Assistant Superintendents

Jean Lafitte National Historic Park & Preserve	Geraldine Smith	504-382-4929
New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park	John Quirk	504-915-2561
Gulf Islands National Seashore	Jerry Eubanks	850-934-2604
Big Thicket National Preserve	Mike George	409-951-6801

Park Contacts

Gulf Islands National Seashore	Dennis Billups	850-934-2611
Big Thicket National Preserve	Nellie Martinez	409-951-6812
Jean Lafitte National Historic Park & Preserve	Lesley Adams	504-382-4953

3. Qualifications

The service shall be provided by a practicing professional psychologist, formally trained in dealing with mental and emotional processes, and behavioral problems. The contractor must also have training and /or experience in Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) services, and possess a current certificate or license of psychology by the States of Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas.

4. Scope of Services

The contractor shall provide support, training, and advice to the JELA, JAZZ, BITH and GUIS Critical Incident Stress Peer Counselors; provide CIS debriefings to employees; provide CIS or preventive occupational stress workshops, and/or provide CIS counseling or referral services, if directed, to employees in JELA, JAZZ, GIS and BITH Parks as follows:

Item A.

The contractor shall meet up to three hours with peer counselors one day each month at each of the 3 park locations (JELA and JAZZ combined as one) (NTE 12 sessions per location. Contractor will be paid only for the actual number of sessions conducted.) to train, develop, and/or advise peer counselors on recognizing and providing initial assistance to employees who are realizing or exhibiting mental or emotional stress symptoms as a result of emergency or other significant events. The contractor shall also provide consulting or intervention services when requested by a peer counselor. Contact will be made with the respective park Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent or Park Representative on matters pertaining to services under this item. Dates, times, and locations will be mutually agreed upon by the contractor and the peer counselors, but will occur during regular working hours, and will be held within JELA, JAZZ, BITH and GUIS Parks or within close proximity to those locations at a mutually agreed upon

location. The total number of hours per month under this Item may not exceed 8 per location, unless prior approval from the JELA/JAZZ/BITH/GUIS Park Superintendent is received.

Item B.

The contractor will conduct on-site Critical Incident Stress debriefings on an on-call basis as requested by the Park Superintendent or Park Representative. These sessions are intended to assist employees to resolve emotionally difficult events and diminish stress symptoms. Attendance at debriefings will be determined by the Superintendent(s), but participation by employees during the sessions will be voluntary. Generally, debriefings will last from 2 to 4 hours per event, but may last up to 8 hours. Debriefings exceeding 8 hours must be approved in advance by the Superintendent. Debriefings will be conducted 24 hours to 1 week after the end of the event, as mutually agreed upon by the contractor and the Government requester. Times and location will also be mutually agreed upon.

Item C.

Per Superintendent or Park Representative, may consult with the contractor for advice in dealing with employee Critical Incident Stress resulting from an emergency or other significant incident. Telephonic or person-to-person consultation sessions may be arranged through mutual agreement, as will dates, time, and locations. Matters related to the administration of this contract, requests for services under this contract, will not be considered consultation sessions.

Item D.

Upon request by the Superintendent or Park Representative, the contractor will develop and conduct informational or training sessions for employees and supervisors regarding CIS and occupational stress. These sessions or workshops may range from 1 to 8 hours or more hours. Example sessions might include (but are not limited to): A training sessions focusing on training supervisors to recognize the symptoms of CIS, to provide initial assistance to co-workers exhibiting those symptoms, and to address any actual or potential CIS problems promptly. Another session that deals with minimizing stress and apprehension during the hurricane season might be held during all-employees hurricane preparedness meeting. Times, dates, locations, and length of sessions will be mutually agreed upon prior to the start of the session.

Item E.

Should a catastrophic or other major emergency occur, the contractor may be called upon to provide counseling and referral services to employees and their families when the event has the potential to interfere with employees' abilities to function, either during the event or later. Notification to the contractor to make counseling and referral services available will be made by the Park Superintendent or Park Representative. Depending on the event or emergency, the contractor may be instructed to travel to a location in Louisiana to make initial assessment for CIS services, and to make his/her services available on-site.

The purpose of the contractor's services shall be to resolve emotionally difficult situations and to diminish stress symptoms. Once notified, the contractor will offer supportive counseling services, evaluations, and community referral services to employees and their families who voluntarily seek the contractor's services. A referral to the contractor may originate with the employee, from a supervisor, from an agency coordinator, or as observed by the contractor.

Within regular working hours, the contractor agrees to respond to requests for appointments immediately upon receipt of the call or other notification. Appointments will be scheduled at the earliest possible date and time, but not later than 5 days after the initial request. At the request of the NPS employee, the appointment will be scheduled at or near any of the following locations during regular working hours:

As necessary, the contractor will notify the park contact at least 48 hours in advance to arrange for on-site office space to meet with employees.

The Park Superintendent(s) will determine the maximum number of counseling sessions that will be offered per event or emergency to an employee at no cost (NTE 12), depending on the event or the emergency. Employees may be offered counseling sessions up to the maximum number, however, it is understood that employees may receive sufficient services in one or two sessions. Sessions will include a complete needs assessment, and when applicable, and evaluation which will be given to the employee and/or appropriate referral agency.

The contractor will take all necessary precautions to protect the confidentiality of client's identifies and counseling sessions under this contract. This is extremely important, both from an ethical point of view, and in order for the services under this contract to be effective in helping employees and their family members.

Item F.

Upon request by the Superintendent or Park Representative, the contractor will assess levels of stress and employee morale among the work force through interviews, observations, questionnaires, or other means. The contractor will provide feedback to the Superintendent(s) either orally and/or in writing, as mutually agreed upon in advance, and within specified time frames. Reports will reflect findings in general terms, and be absent of information which identifies individuals by name or otherwise.

5. Extent of Obligation

The Government is obligated only to the extent of authorized orders made under this BPA.

6. Pricing Agreement

The contractor's rate shall be ? per hour as set forth in attachment no. ? for all services provided. This same rate applies to actual travel time required.

7. Purchase Limitation

The total obligation of the Government under this agreement shall not exceed \$24,500.00. No minimum amount is guaranteed by the Government.

8. Invoices

An itemized invoice shall be submitted monthly for all services provided during the month. Invoices must be separated into the six categories using the following designations: Item A – Peer Group Sessions; Item B – Debriefing; Item C – Consultation; Item D – Training Session; Item E – Counseling Session, delineated by “new client” or “follow-up session”; and Item F – Employee Morale. Items B through F must also specify the requesting Park and the requester's name. Individuals receiving services are not to be identified. The dates services are provided shall also be included with the invoices. All invoices are to be mailed to the following address:

9. Payments

The payment due date under this BPA shall be thirty days after receipt of a properly executed monthly invoice at the JELA & JAZZ Park's contracting office.

Tab

E

Employee Status Report

(Example)

Name	Work Status	Current Address, phone, cell, email	Employee condition	Family members: age/# children	Status of home	FEMA Assistance	EA&A Assistance	Banking resolved	TDY Status Y or N	CISM contact	Date of last contact
Doe, John	P	Home address: 1234 S. James Place, Everywhere, USA. Sister's house: 62 Strange Day St, Anywhere, USA 11111; jackpot@aol.net; 123-555-6574; cell 123-555-9201 Wife's Cell 123-555-3478	OK	Wife Jane 3 children: John Jr. 6, Janie 4, and Joey 2.	flooded, total loss	FEMA # 93-9654985	Paid	Y	N	Sara M. on 9/12	9/24/05

LEGEND

 Wants to continue working

 Unknown pending more information on home or work conditions


 Does not want to return to area

W Working

P Pending arrangements w/supervisor to return to work or detail

D On detail assignment

 Indicates no further Employee Assistance contact needed

 Requests Housing

Tab

F

Housing Needs

Hurricane Katrina Displaced Employee Temporary Housing Plan For Jean Lafitte and New Orleans Jazz National Historical Parks

**Prepared by the NPS National Incident Management Team
September 19, 2005**

I. Introduction -

Hurricane Katrina left more than 1 million people homeless in southeastern Louisiana and many more along the coast of Mississippi and Alabama. FEMA is bringing in 200,000 mobile homes and travel trailers, thousands of prefabricated apartment complexes and homes and several cruise ships to provide temporary housing for these people. Louisiana officials estimate that there are over 250,000 homes that are uninhabitable in the New Orleans area and that some people may have to stay in temporary housing for two or three years. The goal is to create small self-contained communities where FEMA will supply all necessary services, including transportation, job placement, sewer, water, power, mail service and access to schools.

II. Objective –

Provide alternatives for temporary housing for all the displaced employees so that they can find local housing that meets their needs and return to their worksite in a timely manner that meets the Park needs. This falls under the incident objective of managing an employee assistance program with the Parks and Southeast Region to provide for the welfare of NPS employees and their families.

III. Current Status -

23 NPS employees from the New Orleans area are in need of temporary housing after suffering significant damage or loss of their homes. The NIMT has been assessing employees' needs regarding housing near temporary or permanent work sites, housing availability near work sites, and the various forms of housing assistance the NPS is authorized to provide.

Current Housing Needs: numbers may change as more damaged homes become accessible for inspection but a list of current families is available from the confidential employee status matrix

- Jean Lafitte National Park and Preserve – 19 families will need temporary housing for up to 18 months.
- New Orleans Jazz Park – 4 families will need temporary housing.

IV. Alternatives for employees to consider and decide on -

A. No Assistance: Independent action by employees to locate a home to rent or purchase, or to move an RV to their home, etc.

B. FEMA: FEMA housing provided.

C. NPS Assistance: With the goals of supporting employees through the incident, and staffing and opening NPS sites as quickly as possible, the NIMT determined that leaving employees to resolve their own housing need or to independently work through the FEMA assistance programs would not be in the best interests of the employees or the parks. Previous experience with displaced NPS employees has demonstrated the benefits to both the employees and the parks of providing assistance to employees in finding temporary housing near their work site. To provide this timely assistance the NIMT will utilize three strategies to assist dislocated employees.

1. Provide accurate information and assistance for employees to locate their own housing through FEMA or other means.
2. Provide realty assistance from the employee assistance branch to find rental and/or purchase property, trailers or other options near the work site so that employees can determine their options.

Work with FEMA to provide FEMA trailers for our employees to consider at Bayou Segnette State Park.

FEMA delivers and places trailers at sites in which they have an approved land agreement. Due to the large number of displaced families they are looking for large venues in which several trailers can be placed. The Louisiana State Parks are entering into an agreement with FEMA at the State level making these sites available and in a shorter period of time. Barataria is a low consideration by displaced families due to the wilderness/rustic character.

3. Lease houses, apartments or trailers and rent them to the employees. This would be the last option but may be necessary if strategies 1 and 2 are not viable for sufficient employees to meet the critical needs of the Parks.

PROJECTED HOUSING NEEDS AS OF 1/1/06

The following shows the employees that have suffered total losses of their homes or are located in the flood zone. Not all homes in the flood zone have been accessed yet to confirm status but due to their addresses in relation to inundation maps have likely suffered severe damage to total loss.

[illegible]

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G

**Hurricane Response: Use of
Government Personnel,
Equipment, and Funds**

Tab

H

All Employee Memo

To: All Employees

From: Superintendent, Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve
Superintendent, New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park

Subject: Hurricane Recovery, Rebuilding, and Returning to Work

Hurricane Katrina has significantly altered our lives and the places where we work. Since landfall, this hurricane has provided experiences that have dramatically changed each of us. The personal stories are moving. We are very thankful that all of the employees of JELA and JAZZ have been located and survived. Furthermore, we recognize that there is much to be done to restore a sense of routine, to engage in daily activities, and to rebuild our lives. Each of us will respond in different ways and transition through the days ahead will require all of us working together. It is our employees that make the National Park Service and our parks the world class places that they are and we are committed to working with each of you, using the resources available to us, to help all of us through this transition.

As many of you know, the National Incident Management Team has been at Thibodaux assisting in recovery efforts. In one sense, they are the elephant in the room that you cannot ignore. They might, for some, appear to have invaded our space. In reality, they have been working extremely hard to assist employees through the difficult times and aid the park in its rebuilding efforts. They will continue to be a presence in the park as long as we need them.

We recognize the need to have employees return to work and will assist them where we can with a reasonable approach. So that we can accomplish these things we are providing the following information in a question-answer format.

When do I return to work?

Employees need to return to work based upon the lifting of evacuation orders for the area in which you lived. To date the following areas have been opened.

All of Jefferson Parish

All employees duty stationed at Eunice, Lafayette, and Thibodaux and Barataria

I have been instructed to return to work but I need additional time for finding a temporary house, repairing my home, or returning my family to the area. What do I do?

The Park Superintendent is authorized to approve administrative leave for employees who cannot return to their homes at this time. Employees need to notify their Supervisor in writing of their current condition. The Supervisor will forward your request to the Superintendent. Employees needing leave for an extended period of time should contact Employee Assistance to enroll in the Emergency Leave Program.

Where do I report to work?

For the Eunice, Lafayette, Thibodaux, and Barataria units you will report to your normal duty station. If you were assigned to 419 Decatur or JAZZ you will temporarily report to Barataria.

What facilities are currently closed and when will they reopen?

The JELA and JAZZ visitor centers and administrative offices in the French Quarter remain closed. They may reopen in 30-60 days. The Chalmette Battlefield is closed and it is uncertain when it will reopen.

What will happen if I worked at Chalmette?

Because there is no work currently available at that site, the Park Superintendent will be working with affected employees to determine what alternative work assignments are available.

I did not work at Chalmette but I would like a detail to another park. What do I do?

You will need to submit your request in writing, explaining the reasons for the request, to your Supervisor. The Superintendent will have to approve all requests for details.

Will the Park help me find housing?

The Employee Assistance Branch, Incident Management Team, and the Park are actively looking at ways to assist employees in locating housing. (See enclosed)

Can I telecommute or request an alternative work schedule?

Make your request in writing to your Supervisor. Alternative work schedules and telecommuting will be considered as reasonable accommodations for an approved period of time.

I have decided I am not returning to the area can I be reassigned to another park?

We all recognize the significant impact this is having on many of us. We respect your decision. You will need to submit your request in writing to the Employee Assistance Branch or Superintendent so that a decision can be made.

The area in which I live is not yet open to residents what do I do?

We will continue to provide administrative leave to displaced employees who have yet to return to their homes due to mandatory evacuation orders.

Why can't I return to work at 419 Decatur or JAZZ?

Due to the fact that our facilities are not yet operational, we are establishing a temporary work location at the Barataria unit. It is possible that the sites may be operational in 30 days therefore the Barataria site will provide basic tools to perform our work.

My question was not answered. What do I do?

A handout is enclosed that answers many employee assistance questions and includes the Employee Assistance Branch phone number. We have also enclosed a housing plan. Please contact your Supervisor or the Employee Assistance Branch.

The Employee Assistance program has been established through the Incident Management Team. They can provide information and help during difficult times such as these. The Peer Support group is available at 985-448-1471 and should be used when necessary. We are aware of the many issues that exist with regard to housing, including clean up and repair, displaced residents, and the need for temporary housing. We want to appropriately address your needs. To the extent possible, we will consider your individual needs and the authorities that are provided in law and respond to your written request. Your request will need to include sufficient information with regard to your circumstances and what accommodation you need.

These measures are the first steps to restoring each other and the parks. There will continue to be questions and concerns. For nearly all of us, this experience is like no other. Please be considerate of each other. We want to assist you where we can, but we may not be able to provide all the resources that you might need. By working together we can help each other rebuild our parks and restore our lives.

Geraldine Smith

John Quirk

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE FOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE EMPLOYEES AFFECTED BY *HURRICANE KATRINA*

Employee Question & Answers

- Employee Assistance is currently working out of the Wetlands Acadian Cultural Center in Thibodaux, LA; **985-448-1471**. Contact them for further information on assistance available to employees.
- Please periodically check <http://www.inside.nps.gov> for new or changing information.

Will I get a paycheck if I'm not at work?

Yes. You will continue to receive your regular pay and be granted administrative leave until requested to return to work by your supervisor. The date you are returned to work will be dependent on a suitable work site and availability of work as identified by the park superintendent.

How can I get my paycheck if I can't get to or use my bank?

Most credit unions and banks are now up and running and your accounts should be accessible. If you are still having trouble, several sites have been set up to assist banking patrons get access to their funds. The following are sites and phone numbers to help you get information on banks and credit unions.

Office of Financial Institutions (banks, thrifts, and credit unions)

- Lafayette – (337) 262-5754
- Toll Free Nationwide – (866) 783-5530
- Toll Free In-state (888) 525-9414
- Website – www.ofi.louisiana.gov
- Credit union information – www.ncua.gov or www.cuweb.org/cu_finder.htm or (800) 827-6282.

Frequently asked questions regarding banking can be accessed at www.fdic.gov or at (877) 275-3342.

If you still are having trouble accessing your funds, you may want to set up a new bank account. To do that you can pick up a direct deposit form (SF-1199) from the bank. Fill out the top portion of the form. The bank will complete the lower portion of the form. Fax the direct deposit form to the Southeast Regional Office at **404-562-3255** attn: Leslie Woodie. Keep a copy of the form for your records. If you need assistance in completing or submitting the form, please call Employee Assistance at **985-448-1471**.

How can I get some cash for immediate needs?

- Eastern National Parks and the Employee Alumni Association have set up a fund to assist National Park Service and cooperating association employees impacted by Hurricane Katrina. Individuals are eligible to receive \$500.00 and a family is eligible to receive \$1000.00. Employee Assistance can provide you with the form (see phone number at top) by fax, mail or email or you can get the form from the Employee and Alumni Association at **215-283-6900** (ask for Jack Ryan or Chesley Moroz). If you are unable to get your immediate supervisor's signature have any park supervisor sign or you can fax the form without a supervisor's signature to **215-283-0923** with a note explaining your circumstances. Eastern National Parks will confirm with the Employee Assistance office that you are an affected employee. If you need assistance in filling out the forms or submitting them, please call Employee Assistance.
- FEMA is also providing some incidental funds for qualified applicants. To receive these funds you will need to register on the www.fema.gov site or **1-800-621-FEMA (3362)**.

How do I pay for a hotel?

- FEMA will cover hotel room costs or evacuees for 14 days. Contact your hotel for information. Lodging costs already paid by displaced residents will be reimbursed by FEMA. You can get information at fema.gov or **1-800-621-FEMA(3362)**.

Can you help me get assistance through FEMA?

We will try to post FEMA information at this site as we become aware of it (www.inside.nps.gov). There are three ways to register:

- Register on the internet at **fema.gov**
- Call **1-800-621-3362** (FEMA)
- Register at any major evacuation center

Here is some information you may want to know about FEMA at this time (subject to change by FEMA):

- There is a 18 month limitation for which you can apply for assistance
- The cap is \$26,200 and this includes charges that an applicant may have incurred while staying in a hotel
- Must file personal insurance claims first. FEMA may cover costs not covered by your insurance that are associated with the loss of an automobile, home or furniture
- May be eligible for \$2000 incidental payment
- May get up to 3 months of rental assistance
- May cover medical equipment and medicines
- All funds are deposited through direct deposit
- Once you file a claim to have your house damage assessed you will be contacted by FEMA. You must accompany the FEMA assigned inspector to your residence and also provide them with proof of your address. If you do not have a current drivers license or utility bill with that address you may want contact your utility company and ask them to send you a copy of one of your latest bills.
- The website states that once you have the inspection you should receive a notice of results within 10 days.
- Temporary housing may be available.

If you need additional information assistance in locating FEMA information or requesting their assistance, please contact Employee Assistance at the number above.

What happens after my 14 days of assistance with FEMA expires and I haven't received the next step in FEMA assistance?

FEMA and the Employee Alumni Association monies are provided to help with interim lodging and other basic needs such as food, clothing, and diapers. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to call.

Where else can I look for assistance?

In addition to FEMA, there are many agencies that are available to help employees: The Small Business Administration (SBA), Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Red Cross (www.redcross.org).

Here are just a few of the areas where they might be of service:

- HUD – special mortgage insurance programs to assist disaster victims. Under this program individuals or families whose residences were destroyed or damaged to such an extent that reconstruction or replacement is necessary are eligible for 100 percent financing. To find out more about this option contact HUD at www.hud.gov
- SBA offers loans for rebuilding also. They have home disaster loans, business physical disaster loans and economic injury disaster loans. To find out more about these programs contact SBA at sba.gov or you can go into one of the disaster recovery centers listed near your location. Disaster recovery centers are listed on the internet. If you don't have access to the internet you can always contact them at 1-800-659-2955.

What should I do if I lost personal property in Hurricane Katrina?

Employees who lost personal property in the hurricane will need to contact their insurance companies to file claims for replacement of lost personal property. There may also be other options for losses not covered by your insurance such as FEMA. Please check with employee assistance if you have questions at 1-985-448-1471.

What about government property lost in the hurricane?

Lost government property will need to be handled through the property management staff at each park has in place. For those parks that have significant loss, this will be a considerable task. Interim property management procedures will be set up to assist the parks. More information about this is coming as the details are worked out. The Incident Management Teams will help the parks set up interim park offices if needed to start this process.

I won't be able to move back into my house anytime soon. Where will I live?

- Check with your insurance company and determine if you have coverage for temporary lodging. If this is not provided in your policy you may want to research the fema.gov website for a listing of available temporary rentals. Some options you may consider are renting a house or apartment, placing an RV or mobile home at your preferred location, living with family, living with National Park Service employees in your state or in other locations.
- The National Park Service is working with FEMA to provide other options. You can contact Employee Assistance for more information at 985-448-1471.
- FEMA can also provide other assistance. See fema.gov for more information on this option..

Temporary Duty Travel:

- If you are displaced from your home and are assigned to work at your park, NPS may put you in travel status. For the first 30 days you will get the meal and lodging rate designated for the area where you are temporarily housed. This varies by location but averages \$100 per day. For the second thirty days you will receive 55% of that rate. This will average about \$55 per day or \$1650 for a month. Please contact Employee Assistance at 985-448-1471 if you have questions.

I don't have a vehicle to get to work. What should I do?

If you have been assigned to work at a park location, a rental or government car may be authorized. If you are not in travel status, check with your supervisor or employee assistance about reimbursement possibilities.

I am using my personal car for government business. Can I be reimbursed?

If you are in travel status and using your own car to commute to your worksite you can be reimbursed for your mileage as part of your travel status reimbursement. Travel will be handled initially by Richard Devenney of the Southeast Regional Office at 404-562-3105.

How soon may I go back to work?

The parks intent is to get everyone back to work as soon as possible. Crews are working diligently to help in the process. There may be immediate opportunities to work with the Incident Management Teams if you want to get involved with rebuilding your park, check with your supervisor. We encourage you to keep communicating with your supervisor about the status of your work site and your return to duty date.

This incident has been emotionally very hard on all of us. I would like to talk to someone about my fears and frustrations.

- The National Park Service has employees who have been trained to provide support to coworkers in dealing with stressful events. They are based at the Wetlands Acadian Cultural Center in Thibodaux, LA, at **985-448-1471**. Just ask to speak with a Peer Supporter.
- The National Park Service has a contract with professional counselors to provide the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). You can call the EAP anytime for assistance free of charge at **1-800-321-2706**. This is completely confidential and paid for by the National Park Service through this contract.

Can you help me find family members or friends?

Unfortunately, we do not have the resources to locate extended family members, past employees, or friends. However, we may be able to help you locate immediate family (contact Employee Assistance at **985-448-1471**). You can also check the family links registry at www.redcross.org or call **1-877-568-3317**. If you need further assistance or run into difficulties, please contact Employee Assistance.

What should I do if I no longer have any uniforms due to the hurricane damage?

Employees can receive an adjusted allowance to help offset the cost of lost uniform garments. Employees should contact the park superintendent who will approve the adjusted allowance. The park superintendent will identify/highlight Hurricane Katrina as the justification for the allowance adjustment. The superintendent will send

a letter or e-mail to the Southeast Regional Uniform Coordinator, Marcella Gibson for concurrence. Donated uniforms may also be available from other parks in the near future. Contact Employee Assistance for availability.

Other questions?

Don't hesitate to call the Employee Assistance Team if you have other needs, questions, or concerns. Please know that we will do our best to help you or direct you to helpful resources.

The National Park Service is dedicated to helping their employees through this very trying period. Please let us know if you have unanswered questions or other concerns and we will research and assist you as possible.

Be aware of Fraud/Scams when seeking disaster assistance.

Please be aware that there are some people out there that are parading as government officials. These individuals ask for social security numbers, bank or other personal information. FEMA will collect this information during your initial application and provide you an application number. Do not give bank account information to anyone who calls you on the telephone. There is never a "processing fee" to register for FEMA assistance. Also all disaster officials should show the proper credentials. If in doubt call 1-800-621-3362 and select the helpline option.

**Request for Assistance
from E&AA's Hurricane Katrina Relief Fund**

NPS/Cooperating Association Employee Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Mailing address for check: _____

Bank information if wire transfer is requested:

Exact name on account: _____

Name of Bank: _____

Bank Routing number: _____

Bank Account number: _____

Checking _____ Savings _____ (Indicate whether a checking or savings
account)

Park: _____

Immediate Dollar Amount Requested: \$ _____

Long term dollars requested (if funding is available): \$ _____

Please describe the loss or expense incurred due to the hurricane:

Immediate Needs: please describe needs for temporary housing, food, etc:

Estimated Long term needs:(please describe):

Please complete and return to: Hurricane Katrina Relief Fund, E&AA, 470 Maryland Drive, Suite One, Ft. Washington, PA 19034, or fax to 215-283-6923

Employee Signature: _____

NPS Supervisor Acknowledgement of need: _____

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Emergency Leave and NPS Flexibilities

Emergency Leave Transfer Program

Client Agency

The following outlines the process to allow evacuees to receive donated leave through the Emergency Leave Transfer Program (5 CFR 630 Subpart K).

The agency is responsible for:

- determining whether, and how much, donated annual leave is needed by their affected employees;
- approving leave donors and/or leave recipients within their agency;
- notifying their Payroll Processing Section who the recipients are and how many hours are to be donated to that individual.
- notifying their Payroll Processing Section of the donors and how many hours each donor donated.
- contacting OPM if the agency does not receive sufficient donated annual leave to meet the needs of their leave recipients. OPM will solicit and coordinate the transfer of donated annual leave from other Federal agencies to the affected agencies.

The donor:

- donates annual leave, maximum donation is 104 hours with a 1 hour minimum donation.
- does not designate the recipient
- when emergency has been ended, unused donated leave will be returned on a prorated basis.

The recipient:

- does not need to exhaust accrued annual and/or sick leave.
- may be advanced leave before donations are donated and without having to exhaust their accrued annual and/or sick leave.
- maximum amount that can be received per emergency is 240 hours.
- may use donations retroactively to substitute for Leave Without Pay related to the emergency or to liquidate advanced annual or sick leave owed related to the emergency.
- leave will accrue, while using the donated leave, at the same rate as if the employee were in a paid leave status.

Donations received may not be included in a lump sum payment nor made available to be re-credited upon reemployment by a Federal agency; and will be returned to the donors on a prorated basis either in the current leave year or the first pay period of the following leave year; and may not be transferred to another emergency or disaster.

The emergency terminates when the agency determines the emergency or disaster has terminated; or the recipient terminates Federal Service; or is no longer affected by the emergency. When the recipient is no longer affected by the emergency unused donations will be removed from their leave account. Unused donations will not

be returned to the donors until the agency has designated that the specific emergency or disaster has ended for all recipients.

Time and Attendance Coding

When the recipient is using donated emergency leave, the timekeepers should code the Time and Attendance Record (TA) using Pay Code 020 (Annual Leave) or 025 (Annual Leave in Lieu of Sick Leave) with a message "donated leave used." If the TA was already reported as annual or sick leave, contact your Payroll Processing Section and they will process an adjustment to correct the recipient's leave record.

Payroll will manually process in FPPS One Time Adjustments to remove the leave from the donor's annual leave account and to add the leave to the recipient's annual leave account.

GUIDELINE FOR THE EMERGENCY LEAVE TRANSFER PROGRAM

EMERGENCY LEAVE TRANSFER RECIPIENT APPLICATIONS

SER1.1 Application Submission

- a. An employee (or his or her personal representative) who has been adversely affected by a disaster or emergency may make written application to become an emergency leave recipient by completing and submitting OPM Form 1637, Application to Become a Leave Recipient Under the Emergency Leave Transfer Program to the Southeast Region Human Resources Office, for a specific number of leave hours.
- b. An employee's family member who has been adversely affected by a disaster or emergency and who has no reasonable access to other forms of assistance may also make written application to become a leave recipient through HR/SER.
- c. For purposes of this program, an employee will be considered to be adversely affected by a major disaster or emergency if the disaster or emergency has caused severe hardship to the employee or a family member of the employee to such a degree that the employee's absence from work is required.
- d. The employee's application (OPM Form 1637,) must be accompanied by the following information concerning each potential leave recipient:
 - (1) The name, position title, grade or pay level of the potential emergency leave recipient;
 - (2) A statement describing his or her need for leave from the emergency leave transfer program; and
 - (3) Additional information that may be required by the Human Resources Office.
- e. HR/SE must be satisfied (e.g., release form) that the personal representative of the affected employee is acting for and has the permission of the employee.
- f. An employee must apply to be a leave recipient within 90 days after the major disaster or emergency has been declared by the President. HR/SE will consider exceptions if there are **circumstances beyond the employee's control or in other cases of extreme personal hardship**.

1.2 Application Approval

HR/SER will review the application to become a leave recipient under the emergency leave transfer program. HR/SER will determine if the potential leave recipient is or has been affected by the major disaster or emergency in accordance with the standards set forth in OPM regulations and will determine the appropriate amount of leave to be received subject to the limitations set forth in

1.3 Approval Notification

- a. If the application is approved, HR/SER will notify the leave recipient (or his or her personal representative) within 10 calendar days (excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal public holidays) after the date the application was received.
- b. If the application is not approved, HR/SER will notify the applicant (or the personal representative who made application on behalf of the potential emergency leave recipient) within 10 calendar days (excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal public holidays) after the date the application was received. HR/SER must give the reasons to

the employee for its disapproval of his or her application to receive transferred leave from the emergency leave program.

EMERGENCY LEAVE DONORS

An employee who wishes to donate accrued annual leave under this program may voluntarily submit OPM Form 1638, Request to Donate Annual Leave Under the Emergency Leave Transfer Program, to the Southeast Region Human Resources. The minimum amount of annual leave an emergency leave donor may contribute in a leave year is 1 hour, and the maximum amount is 104 hours. An emergency leave donor may not contribute annual leave for transfer to a specific emergency leave recipient. However, an employee may continue to donate his or her unused annual leave to a specific leave recipient under the separate authority for voluntary leave transfer in 5 U.S.C. 6332, but must follow the rules governing that program.

September 2, 2005

P6015(2654)

Memorandum

To: Directorate and Field Directorate

From: Acting Assistant Director, Human Capital /s/ Evelyn Sheehan

Subject: Hurricane Katrina – Absence, Leave, Overtime Pay and Hiring Flexibilities

This memorandum provides instructions regarding absence, leave, overtime pay and hiring flexibilities in conjunction with Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath. It encourages consideration of employees' recovery needs in the aftermath of the hurricane.

Excused Absence

Interior supervisors are authorized to excuse from duty without charge to leave or loss of pay employees who are affected by Hurricane Katrina and the aftermath and who can be spared from their usual responsibilities. In exercising this authority, supervisors should consider each case individually and ensure excused absence is appropriate. Specifically, excused absence may be granted to:

- (1) Employees who are requested to assist in authorized emergency law enforcement, relief, or clean-up efforts by Federal, State, or other officials having jurisdiction and whose participation in such activities has been approved by their employing agency; and
- (2) Employees who are prevented from reporting for work or faced with a personal emergency because of the hurricane and its aftermath who need a reasonable amount of additional time off to complete their personal recovery efforts.

This policy does not apply to Federal employee members of the National Guard or Reserves who are called up to assist in disaster relief and recovery efforts, since they are entitled to military leave under 5 U.S.C. 6323(b).

Premium Pay for Employees Performing Emergency Overtime Work

In accordance with authority under 5 U.S.C. 5547(b), and under Office of Personnel Management (OPM) regulations (5 CFR 550.106), the Department will make exceptions to the biweekly premium pay limitations for employees performing emergency overtime work in connection with Hurricane Katrina and the aftermath. These employees **must be paid premium pay under the annual limitation of GS-15, step 10**, rather than the GS-15, step 10 biweekly limitation (with the exception of certain fixed premium payments, such as availability pay, as specified in 5 CFR 550.107). Employees, including law enforcement officers, paid under an annual limitation receive premium pay only to the extent that the aggregate of basic pay and premium pay for the calendar year does not exceed the **greater** of the **annual** rate for: (1) GS-15, step 10 (including any applicable special salary rate or locality rate of pay); or (2) level V of the Executive Schedule.

Employees will be entitled to premium pay under the annual limitation effective at the time the hurricane devastated the coast.

(Section 1114 of Public Law 107-107, December 28, 2001, modified the biweekly and annual limitations on premium pay under 5 U.S.C. 5547. For additional information on administering the annual premium pay limitation, see OPM's interim regulations on premium pay limitations at 67 FR 19319, April 19, 2002, or (<http://www.opm.gov/fedregis/2002/66-0019319-a.htm>.)

Emergency Leave Transfer Program

An emergency leave transfer program would permit employees in an executive agency to donate unused annual leave for transfer to employees of the same or other agencies who have been adversely affected by the hurricane and its aftermath and who need additional time off from work without having to use their own paid leave. If you believe there is a need to establish an emergency leave transfer program to assist employees affected by Hurricane Katrina, please contact Nancy Miller in the Office of Personnel Policy at (202) 208-6754.

Emergency Critical Hiring

Under 5 CFR 213.3102(i)(2), 30-day appointments in the excepted service may be made to fill critical hiring needs, and these appointments may be extended for an additional 30 days. This authority may be used to fill Senior Level positions, as well as positions at lower grades. Career Transition Assistance Plan (CTAP), Reemployment Priority List (RPL), and Interagency CTAP (ICTAP) requirements under 5 CFR part 330 do not apply to these appointments.

Direct-Hire Authority

When OPM determines there is a critical hiring need or a shortage of candidates for particular occupations, grades (or equivalent), and/or geographic locations, candidates may be appointed directly.

OPM has granted Government-wide direct-hire authority for GS-6-2 Medical Officers, GS-0610 Nurses, GS-0647 Diagnostic Radiological Technicians, and GS-0660 Pharmacists at all grade levels and all locations; and for GS-2210 Information Technology Specialists (Information Security) positions at GS-9 and above at all locations, in support of Government-wide efforts to carry out the requirements of the Government Information Security Reform Act and the Federal Information Security Management Act.

Individuals in the categories, occupations and specialties, and grades listed above may receive competitive service career, career-conditional, term temporary, emergency indefinite, or overseas limited appointments, as appropriate. In all cases, public notice requirements in 5 U.S.C. 3327 and 3330, and ICTAP requirements must be observed.

If you believe you have one or more occupations for which an agency-specific direct-hire authority may be appropriate in support of Hurricane Katrina relief and recovery efforts, please contact Winford Hooker in the Office of Human Resources at (202) 208-7949.

Other Flexibilities Include:

You may contract with private sector temporary employment firms for services to meet emergency staffing needs. These contracts may be for 120 days and may be extended for an additional 120 days, subject to displaced employee procedures.

You may make competitive service appointments for 120 days or less without clearing CTAP or ICTAP. However, the CTAP and ICTAP programs may help identify one or more well-qualified, displaced Federal employees who are available for immediate employment.

You may make temporary, term, or permanent competitive service appointments of current/former employees on the RPL. Conversely, in some cases, you may wish to make an exception to the RPL provisions to appoint someone else under 5 CFR 330.207(d).

For additional information on any of these flexibilities, please contact your Bureau/Office Servicing Personnel Officer.

The Servicewide point of contact for leave issues is Deborah Martin at (202) 354-1994 or e-mail at deborah_martin@nps.gov.

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**OPM Flexibilities Available to
Assist Federal Employees
Affected by Severe Weather
Emergencies and Natural
Disasters**



Office of Personnel Management

The Federal Government's Human Resources Agency



This page can be found on the web at the following url:
<http://opm.gov/oca/compmemo/2005/2005-13.asp>

CPM 2005-13

June 28, 2005

MEMORANDUM FOR HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

FROM: DAN G. BLAIR
Acting Director

SUBJECT: HR Flexibilities Available to Assist Federal Employees Affected by Severe Weather Emergencies and Natural Disasters

Many parts of the United States must occasionally cope with severe weather emergencies and natural disasters, frequently with little warning. Such emergencies are often dangerous and extremely disruptive for those who live in the affected communities. As "hurricane season" is upon us, this memorandum advises you of the various human resources (HR) flexibilities currently available that will allow you to assist Federal employees affected by severe weather emergencies and natural disasters and their aftermath.

Relief and Recovery Efforts

I applaud the boundless generosity and responsiveness of Federal employees to assist in relief and recovery efforts during emergency situations. To assist those parts of the Federal Government that are mobilized to respond to disasters, and to assist in any relief and recovery efforts, I encourage managers to grant excused absence to employees who are requested to assist in emergency law enforcement, relief, or clean-up efforts in affected communities, as authorized by Federal, State, or other officials having jurisdiction, and whose participation in such activities has been approved by their employing agency. (This policy does not apply to Federal employee members of the National Guard or Reserves who are called up to assist in disaster relief and recovery efforts, since they are entitled to military leave under 5 U.S.C. 6323(b).) In addition, I request that excused absence be granted to employees who are prevented from reporting for work or faced with a personal emergency because of a weather emergency and its aftermath and who can be spared from their usual responsibilities.

Premium Pay for Employees Performing Emergency Overtime Work

Agencies are reminded of their authority under the law (5 U.S.C. 5547(b)) and OPM regulations (5 CFR 550.106) to make exceptions to the biweekly premium pay limitation. When the head of an agency or his or her designee determines that an emergency posing a direct threat to life or property exists, an employee who is receiving premium pay for performing overtime work in connection with the emergency will be subject to an annual pay limitation rather than the biweekly pay limitation (with the exception of certain fixed premium payments, such as availability pay, as specified in 5 CFR 550.107). Employees paid under an annual limitation receive premium pay only to the extent that the aggregate of basic pay and premium pay for the calendar year does not exceed the **greater** of the **annual** rate for-

1. GS-15, step 10 (including any applicable special rate or locality rate), or
2. Level V of the Executive Schedule.

For additional information on administering the annual premium pay limitation, see OPM's final regulations on premium pay limitations at 69 FR 55941, September 17, 2004. These regulations may be viewed on the Federal Register Web site at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html>.) Additional guidance on premium pay is available at <http://www.opm.gov/oca/pay/HTML/FACTOT.asp> and <http://www.opm.gov/oca/pay/HTML/05GSCap.asp>.

I encourage agencies to exercise this authority in the case of any employee who performs emergency overtime work in connection with a weather-related emergency and its aftermath. You must make the determination as soon as practicable and make entitlement to premium pay under the annual limitation effective as of the first day of the pay period in which the emergency began.

Special Solicitations for Charitable Contributions During Emergencies and Disasters

The Director of OPM may grant permission for special solicitations of Federal employees, outside of the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), in support of victims in cases of emergencies and disasters. All requests must be made in writing. The request should include the following: information on the agency(ies) and location(s) where the special solicitation will be conducted; dates on which the special solicitation will be conducted; and information on the charitable organization(s) that will be the recipient of special solicitation funds. Because a special solicitation is not a part of the CFC, employees may give only through cash or check and may not use payroll deduction. Federal employees also may contribute to local relief efforts through their participation in the CFC. Employees may designate their payroll deduction or make a cash/check contribution to the organization of their choice. For access to frequently asked questions and answers on special solicitations, please visit <http://www.opm.gov/cfc>.

Emergency Leave Transfer Program

The President may direct OPM to establish an emergency leave transfer program to assist employees affected by an emergency or major disaster. The emergency leave transfer program permits employees in an executive agency to donate unused annual leave for transfer to employees of the same or other agencies who have been adversely affected by the emergency or major disaster and who need additional time off from work without having to use their own paid leave. If you believe there is a need to establish

an emergency leave transfer program to assist employees affected by an emergency or disaster and its aftermath, please contact your OPM Human Capital Officer. Additional information on the emergency leave transfer program is available at <http://www.opm.gov/oca/leave/HTML/emerg.htm>.

Emergency Critical Hiring

Under 5 CFR 213.3102(i)(2), you may make 30-day appointments in the excepted service to fill a critical hiring need. You may extend these appointments for an additional 30 days. You may use this authority to fill Senior Level positions, as well as positions at lower grades; you also may determine what qualifications are required. Career Transition Assistance Plan (CTAP), Reemployment Priority List (RPL), and Interagency CTAP (ICTAP) requirements under 5 CFR part 330 do not apply to these appointments.

Direct-Hire Authority

Agencies are reminded of current OPM-authorized Governmentwide direct hire authorities. These authorities, which allow you to appoint candidates directly, include GS-0602 Medical Officers, GS-0610 and GS-0620 Nurses, GS-0647 Diagnostic Radiologic Technicians, and GS-0660 Pharmacists at all grade levels and all locations. You may give individuals in the categories, occupations and specialties, and grades listed above competitive service career, career-conditional, term, or temporary appointments, as appropriate. In all cases, you must adhere to the public notice requirements in 5 U.S.C. 3327 and 3330 and all ICTAP requirements. Additional information on these authorities is available at <http://www.opm.gov/employ/html/sroa2.asp#directhire>.

If you feel you have one or more occupations for which an agency-specific direct-hire authority may be appropriate in support of relief and recovery efforts, please contact your OPM Human Capital Officer.

Other Flexibilities

You may contract with private sector temporary employment firms for services to meet your emergency staffing needs. These contracts may be for 120 days and may be extended for an additional 120 days, subject to displaced employee procedures.

You may make competitive service appointments for 120 days or less without clearing CTAP or ICTAP. However, these programs may help you identify one or more well-qualified displaced Federal employees who are available for immediate employment.

Current and former employees on your agency RPL are another immediate source of qualified individuals available for temporary, term, or permanent competitive service appointments. Conversely, in some cases, you may wish to make an exception to the RPL provisions to appoint someone else under 5 CFR 330.207(d).

Should additional personnel be required for relief efforts, OPM may authorize other options upon agency request. These include temporary emergency need appointments (up to 1 year); SES limited emergency appointments; reemployed annuitants; and rehiring retirees or others who left the Federal Government with buyouts.

For additional information on any of these flexibilities, agency Chief Human Capital Officers and/or Human Resources (HR) Directors may contact their assigned OPM Human Capital Officer. Employees should contact their agency human resources offices for assistance.

cc: Chief Human Capital Officers
Human Resources Directors
Federal Executive Boards

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**Federal Employee's Education
and Assistance Fund**

Federal employees who have had major losses due to a declared natural disaster may apply for a grant \$400 from the Federal Employee Education and Assistance Fund by filling out an Emergency Assistance application and the attached Additional information sheet. (Only one grant per household)

No-interest loans up to \$600 are also available. Loans will *only* be made payable to a specific creditor, i.e., shelter costs, clean-up, repairs/supplies, etc. The amount of each loan will depend on the number of requests and our program's financial ability to assist with those requests.

The employee should complete the entire Emergency Assistance application including the "Applicant Loan Agreement" even if only requesting the grant at this time and not a loan. Providing all information now makes the loan process go more quickly later if a loan is needed. Loans are repaid by payroll allotment at \$30 a pay period, so a voluntary allotment space must be available to receive a loan.

Additional Information & Explanation for the FEEA Grant

In order to be considered for the grant, the following information is requested, even if you listed it previously on the application.

Employee Name: Agency

Name of disaster (if any) Date:

List your extra out-of-pocket expenses and the items you have had to purchase as a result of the disaster:

Explanation of the damages:

Homeowner's Insurance: ,yes --no Deductible \$Paid: yesno

If your car was damaged, how much were your repairs and how much was your deductible?,.....

Married: --yes ,-no Name of spouse:,.....

Spouse employed: ,-yes --no Spouse's monthly income:

Spouse employed by:,.....

Other adults in household: --yes --no Monthly income:,.....

Employed by: -----

Other assistance, i.e., Red Cross, FEMA, local charities: